



HARWELL PARISH COUNCIL

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P26/V1575/O - Land to the south of Harleigh, Reading Road, Rowstock - Supplementary letter

The Parish Council submitted comments on this application on 27 June 2026. Since then the Council has considered further matters arising from a related application on the adjoining site, P26/V1963/FUL, and wishes to supplement its earlier submission with the following points. These do not withdraw or alter the Council's original comments, which stand alongside this letter.

Combined access and visibility splays

The Council has since become aware that the adjoining application P26/V1963/FUL for a replacement dwelling at Harleigh will share the same access as this scheme. The access will therefore serve five dwellings in total rather than four. The Council asks the highway authority to confirm that the visibility splay assessment and swept path analysis for this application account for that combined traffic generation, rather than treating the two schemes as separate and unconnected for highway purposes.

Cumulative highway impacts around the proposed access

The Council has identified a further highway safety matter arising from the specific location of the proposed access. The access would sit immediately adjacent to an existing bus stop lay-by and in the order of 100 metres from the Rowstock roundabout, which carries significant traffic between the A34 and the local road network and which also functions as a relief route when incidents occur on the A34. The westbound carriageway also widens to two lanes at this point.

Directly opposite the proposed access is an existing residential junction, with a second bus stop a short distance away on the opposite side of the carriageway. Vehicles also emerge onto the highway from the adjacent petrol station, via a relatively steep access.

The Council's concern is not simply the additional traffic generated by the development, but whether the cumulative interaction between the proposed access, the opposing residential junction, the petrol station access, the two bus stops and the nearby roundabout has been assessed as a single, closely spaced cluster of movements, rather than considered separately.

The Council asks the highway authority to confirm, in particular, whether the effect on visibility of a bus standing in the adjacent lay-by has been assessed for vehicles emerging from the proposed access, and whether the interaction of these access points and stopping vehicles has been modelled for peak traffic conditions.

The Council also asks the highway authority to confirm that the location and spacing of the proposed access accords with the principles set out in Manual for Streets, any applicable DMRB guidance, and Oxfordshire County Council's own highway design standards on visibility, junction spacing and highway safety.

Wider highway context

The Council's original comments referred to the cumulative impact of planned highway activity in the area, including the Science Vale growth corridor and the potential for substantial construction traffic on the A417 should the South East Strategic Reservoir Option proceed. The Council is also aware of the Relief to Rowstock scheme on the A4130 between Milton Interchange and Steventon Lights. While that scheme does not directly affect the Reading Road access itself, the Council asks the highway authority to have regard to the combined effect of planned highway works and growth in the wider area when assessing whether the proposed visibility splays will remain adequate over the lifetime of the permission, not only against current traffic conditions.

Securing genuine self-build delivery

The Council's original comments noted that the application does not identify any mechanism to ensure the four plots are allocated to individuals on Part 1 of the VWHDC Self-build Register, and that no eligibility evidence has been required or provided. The Council wishes to reinforce this point. Section 1(A1) and (A2) of the Self-build and Custom

Housebuilding Act 2015 defines self-build and custom housebuilding as building or completion by the individual occupier, and expressly excludes a house built on a plot acquired from a person who builds it wholly or mainly to plans or specifications that person has decided or offered. The Council is aware of instances elsewhere in the area where nominally self-build plots have in practice been delivered as developer-led builds with limited customisation options, which has allowed development to proceed at a scale and pace that would not otherwise have been achieved through a conventional application.

The Council asks the Planning Officer to consider securing genuine self-build delivery through a Section 106 obligation or unilateral undertaking, requiring that the initial owner of each dwelling has primary input into its final design and layout, that each dwelling is occupied by the person who built or commissioned it for a minimum period, and that completion is evidenced by a Building Control completion certificate or equivalent before the obligation is treated as discharged. The Council considers this necessary to ensure the permission genuinely contributes to meeting the statutory shortfall identified in the Council's original comments, rather than functioning as a route to conventional development under the self-build banner.

Scope of the access improvement

The Council notes that the proposed access realignment is more substantial than would typically be required to serve four bungalows alone. The Council asks the Planning Officer to confirm whether the access has been designed with any regard to the potential for further development of the wider field to the rear, and if so, to ensure that any permission granted, and any associated highway works, are expressly limited to serving this development of four self-build plots. The Council would not wish to see the access improvements secured through this application relied upon as justification for further development of adjoining land at a later date, and asks that any condition or agreement make this clear.

Submitted on behalf of Harwell Parish Council.