



Charity number 501791

Planning Services
Wychavon District Council
Civic Centre
Queen Elizabeth Drive
Pershore WR10 1PT

c/o 14 Owletts End
Evesham
WR11 1DB

15 August 2026

FAO Joan Desmond

Dear Joan

Planning Application Ref W/26/01589/OUT Land off Pershore Road, Hampton, Evesham

We wish to register an objection to this application by Stonebond Housing.

We are very concerned about this proposal for many reasons. These are set out in the following statement and an attached plan. We are raising some serious issues, so hope that you are able to take these into account when preparing your report on this application.

I can be contacted on 07801 846049 or vecs1972@gmail.com if any further information is required.

Yours sincerely

Gill Pawson
Chair, Vale of Evesham Civic Society

Planning application W/26/01589/OUT

Proposal for 70 affordable houses on land south of Pershore Road, Hampton, Evesham by Stonebond Housing.

OBJECTION

This statement includes reasons why this application should be refused, but also, recognising that it may be permitted, suggestions for significant improvements are also included.

Submitted Planning Statement

1. The Big Picture. This highlighted first page of the Planning Statement sets out issues that the whole country is suffering with. It bears no relation to the situation in Evesham. It is totally misleading. In 2024 the MHCLG reported that only **18** households were living in temporary accommodation in the whole of Wychavon.
2. Paragraph 1.3 states that the scheme is for 100% affordable housing, later explained to be 80% social/affordable rent and 20% intermediate/shared ownership. The application explains that there are local services in Hampton, but the site is at the furthest extremity of the town and is in no way related to the nearby housing. The residents are surely going to feel isolated and moved as far away as possible from private housing in the area, leading to social exclusion. This is not the way to generate integrated communities.
3. Paragraph 1.3 justifies the proposed scheme on the basis of Wychavon's *acute affordable housing crisis*. It fails to demonstrate any detail of this, other than a claim that there are *2569 households currently backlogged on the social housing waiting list*. Paragraph 5.1 refers to data from MHCLG but gives no details. Such a dramatic claim should be backed up with data, when it relates to and the source of the data acknowledged; presented in a detailed appendix so that the validity of the claim can be verified.

From a recent (13/08/2026) Freedom of Information request the figures regarding under supply of social housing in Wychavon are as follows:

We currently have 791 households registered who live in Evesham the main applicants ages have been separated below. Please note this doesn't include other household members.

18-24 - 104

25-34 – 232

35 -44 – 195

45 – 54 – 102

55 -64 – 89

65 + - 69

There are 153 homes that have been empty for more than 6 months.

Some of this number will be accommodated in the recently approved affordable housing schemes at 62 units off Hamilton Road, the 30 off Highfield Road, the 59 being built on land off Abbey Road and 32 off Cheltenham Road.

These figures completely undermine the applicant's contention that there is an acute crisis of affordable housing.

4. The contention in paragraph 1.7 that Wychavon only has 3.76 years housing land supply. Again, this is not presented in the statement in any detail or with any authority sources.
5. The statement makes various references to a mandatory 20% buffer to be applied to the housing land supply figures. The National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 78(b) allows this can be done:

The supply of specific deliverable sites should in addition include a buffer (moved forward from later in the plan period) of:

 - a) 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land; or*
 - b) 20% where there has been significant under delivery⁴⁰ of housing over the previous three years, to improve the prospect of achieving the planned supply.*

In Wychavon District, the application of a 20% buffer is heavily contested. Historically, Wychavon has comfortably exceeded delivery targets (achieving 133% in the official 2023 Housing Delivery Test). However, because the three joint councils (Wychavon, Malvern Hills, and Worcester City) officially adopted the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR) on 26 March 2026, their overall five-year housing land supply rules have shifted.

With the adoption of the SWDPR, Wychavon District Council officially restored its five-year housing land supply. This means the "tilted balance" (which heavily favours speculative development approvals) no longer automatically applies.

Because Wychavon is currently under tight planning monitoring and a government planning sanction for appeal losses, developers are actively contesting the council's metrics. Some developers, including Stonebond, argue that a 20% buffer should be triggered based on current under-delivery arguments.

Since June 15, 2026, Wychavon District Council has been placed under special government measures. Developers submitting major housing applications (10+ homes) can choose to apply directly to the Planning Inspectorate instead of local councillors. The sanction was applied because 10.7% of major applications refused locally were overturned on appeal between 2023 and 2025. The council disputes this and is challenging the ruling, noting their appeal overturn rate has since dropped to 5.2%.

In these circumstances, despite seeking to rely on the 20% buffer, Stonebond has not submitted this application to the Planning Inspectorate, as it was entitled to do. Therefore, the Local Planning Authority is in a position to ignore the contention that a 20% buffer should be added to the housing land supply figures.

Paragraphs 3.4 states that the housing mix and density has been informed by the latest SHMA. Unfortunately, the SHMA has not been updated since 2021, so is now 5 years out of date and should not be relied upon. The statement refers to accommodation for the elderly, but makes no reference to the need for housing for the disabled.

6. The Planning Statement fails to take into account the newly adopted Design Code SPD.

7. Paragraph 5.6 refers to the site as a natural rounding-off of the Hampton settlement. It fails to make any mention of the fact that the existing housing area of Ypres Way and White Walk were the agreed rounding off of Hampton. Any development to the west encroaches on the visually exposed, steep slope that is in the countryside. This countryside designation is acknowledged in the SWDPR Policies Map, which clearly shows the boundary to Evesham Town to the east of the application site. On the same map there is no allocation shown for housing on the land that is the subject of the current application.

The attention of the Local Planning Authority is drawn to the attached plan. This plan was drawn up and submitted by Bellway Homes as its large-scale landscaping proposals, on which it is understood the housing scheme was justified. This scheme includes the application site. The plan shows an area that is now the housing application site to be handed over to the Vale Landscape Heritage Trust to manage. The Trust had not been approached about this proposal and has had no subsequent approach.

It should be noted that the landscaping of most of the area shown on the plan has been implemented, albeit that most of the recent planting has died in this summer's drought and will need to be replaced this winter. The application site, which should by now be an orchard, is a field, cultivated this summer for wheat.

8. Paragraph 6.1 refers to the mitigation strategy for the impact of the development on this very visible site. See comments below on the DaAS, but also it is impossible to see how the claim about 'graduated movement' can help with mitigation as no details have been provided. It is not described in the DaAS!
9. Paragraph 6.2 claims that the impact on the wider landscape will be minor and fully mitigated. See comments at point 7 on the DaAS below. The judgement of the author of the LVIA is called into question. Already, it is obvious from the development on the lesser slope on the north side of Pershore road that it will have a significant visual impact on views to the west, and this is despite a well-established hedge close to its west boundary. It is considered necessary that the Planning Officer undertake a detailed site visit to determine whether the findings of the LVIA can be relied upon.

Submitted Transport Assessment and Travel Plan

1. For both walking and cycling, the developer is relying on the occupants of the houses using the B4084 Pershore Road to get anywhere. There is no footway on the south side of the road. This means that anyone not accessing the site by car having to cross over the busy highway. This is recognised in the submitted documents and a central island is proposed to allow pedestrians to cross to the north side of Pershore Road. However, even with the 30mph restriction moved west of the site access, the traffic on the road will still be arriving from the west at speed, given that it will be on a derestricted highway travelling from the Pershore direction.

Measures to improve conditions for non-car access to and from the site are suggested in point 3 of the DaAS below.

Submitted Design and Access Statement

1. The submitted Design and Access Statement (DaAS) is out of date.

It refers to the 'Emerging South Worcestershire Development Plan Review 2026'. This has now been adopted and its policies are those that are relevant to the consideration of the appropriateness of this proposed development.

It fails to recognise that there is now an adopted SPD incorporating a Design Code for Wychavon. This replaced the now out of date Design Guide which is quoted in the submitted DaAS. The Design Code contains a wide range of relevant requirements, many of which MUST be delivered in a submission and many more of which SHOULD be addressed.

Despite the objections to this development, in the event that it is likely that this application might be permitted, the above problems with the submitted documentation must be addressed with the submission of a suit of new documents.

2. Figure 6 purports to show local transport information. It has no key, making it difficult to interpret.
3. The submitted plans, including Figure 7 show no connection from the proposed housing to the adjacent housing. Anyone wishing to walk or cycle to the local services, especially the primary school, would feel much safer walking or cycling away from the busy Pershore Road, which as the design stands is the only route out of the site by any means of travel. A link to the east should connect to the footpaths that exist on the west side of the existing housing areas. From a site inspection, it is apparent that an informal connection already exists, created by the local dog walkers to gain access to the field. This arrangement (an perhaps adding another link) should be formalised with a path suitable for walkers and cyclists.
4. The submitted plans, including Figure 9, show minimal space for rear gardens; 30% of the plot area. All developers should be encouraged to allow more space for gardens; for householders to grow their own fruit and vegetables or larger areas for children to play outside. No childrens' play area is shown and the current plans would mean any play area would have to be on the opposite side of the access road, meaning that children have to cross the road to access the area. A separate allotment area should be provided if this layout is to be maintained.
5. The Contextual Analysis and the Character and Appearance Strategy need to be revised to take account of the Design Code (see point 1 above).
6. The Landscape Strategy presented in Section 4.6 ignores current advice that woodland planting needs to be adjacent to other woodland planting, to ensure good corridors for wildlife to move around. The proposal to plant woodland trees is welcomed, but it should be in a long, linear belt immediately adjacent to the existing strip alongside the Merry Brook. This would result in a wide belt of trees, either side of the brook, providing significantly enhanced conditions for wildlife. The area could then be fenced off to minimise the risk of vandalism to newly planted trees. The orchard planting is also welcomed.

- 7 The Design Development and Landscape Strategy is relying on a belt of tree planting alongside the access road to the housing to reduce the visual impact of the houses. The document acknowledges that this is a steeply sloping site with the housing placed at the top of the slope, meaning that it will be very visible from the west, northwest and southwest, as described in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Trees take many years to grow to any useful size, when it comes to screening value. In addition, the proposed location of the screening is that it starts life lower down than all of the houses. A cross-section would help to explain this, showing the development after 5 years of planting, 10 years, 20 years and 50 years. The cross-sections should also show the existing height of the established trees on the west side of Merry Brook. These plans should be submitted to enable the better understanding of the impact of the proposals in this very exposed location. In this case the developer is seeking to achieve the unachievable, at least for decades.
- 8 The photograph on page 58 is very misleading. Few of the houses proposed will be this big!

Plan showing the application site within the landscaped area of the housing built by Bellway Homes

