Buckinghamshire – Aylesbury Vale – Planning Application 25-00406-APP

"HS2 - why you should read this"

Introduction

By now many of you will know about EKFB (the contractor)/HS2's (the client) plans to construct a 'Spring Chamber' (think of it as a large tank in the ground) in the fields to the north of Dobbins Lane end and to the south of Kings Farm Shop. We understand the reasons for the Environment Agency's needs for a Spring Chamber - which is to manage groundwater levels and flows and validate aspects of the design for the planned Green Tunnel and deep cuttings as part of the main HS2 works. We are not objecting to the Spring Chamber.

The concerns of residents are centred on the EKFB/HS2 plan to send HGV and other vehicles through Wendover's residential streets in order to access the fields at the bottom end of Dobbins Lane. As you know driving along South Street and crossing the staggered junction at the top of the High Street is fairly perilous at the best of times due to parked vehicles and general congestion. EKFB/HS2 seem to have little regard for pedestrian safety – if we hadn't raised a petition (now around 800 names and counting..) EKFB/HS2 would have just gone ahead with their hazardous proposals.

Whilst EKFB/HS2 may indeed be reducing HGV traffic on their preferred route they nevertheless have completely ignored the alternatives and have failed to demonstrate any meaningful 'due diligence' regarding the other access options. Our preferred option of accessing the fields via Nash Lee End reduces pedestrian risk to practically zero whilst minimising all the other forms of disruptions associated with navigating through residential streets. It is the safest, least impactful access route.

We thank all those who signed the petition – but now Wendover really needs your help by you considering the content of this 'guide' and hopefully submitting an objection to Bucks Council before the **25**th **March 2025 deadline**.

This guide provides 'headline' points setting out key issues for your consideration if you would like to object – and includes a recent powerful letter from our MP to the HS2 Minister. For those wishing to object online we provide links and show some screen images of the process. We provide an email address for those wishing to email in rather than using the online forms. Finally, a postal address is given for those preferring more traditional means of communicating!

It is important to object along valid lines - rather than being too 'emotional' – we have been careful to follow Bucks Council guidelines (shared below) in this respect in arriving at our 'headlines'.

Finally, we include some maps of the access route being proposed by EKFB/HS2 and also our preferred access route via Nash Lee End – as agreed by the farmer/landowner.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

28th February 2025

Wendover Residents' Group (David Cobb, John Mayhead and others)

Executive Summary

- EKFB/HS2's communications with residents, and reporting on meetings, have been at best, disingenuous. They have repeatedly asserted they have thoroughly assessed alternative access routes but then say they cannot get access rights to alternative access routes. A Freedom of Information request reveals they have not contacted anyone not even the farmer/landowner at Nash Lee End.
- EKFB/HS2 conceded in a meeting with residents on 11th February 2025 that they didn't have a traffic management plan. One was hastily prepared overnight to be included in their planning application submission the next day. The application introduces, for the very first time, the additional 2,280 additional non-HGV vehicle movements through Wendover. The working hours have also changed to include a full day on Saturdays.
- EKFB/HS2, apart from one brief reference, have completely ignored the perils of their vehicles
 navigating the tortuous South Street already a major traffic artery alongside a pre-school
 nursery where children arrive/leave at various times during the day.
- Planning approvals rely on compliance with planning policies. There is little doubt that EKFB/HS2
 have failed the test of compliance with Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework
 (NPPF) in respect of considering transport issues at the 'earliest stages of plan making and
 development proposals'. Introducing new forecast traffic and vehicle movements at the point of
 making a planning application is a case in point.
- Rest assured, we have good support from Wendover Parish Council and Bucks Councillors. Our
 MP Greg Smith strongly endorses our concerns and, on 25th February 2025, he wrote to the Rail
 Minister Lord Hendy urging him to "instruct HS2 to return to the drawing board and consider
 the alternative options to access the Spring Chamber site".

Below we provide some headlines for you to consider

1. Consultation with residents

A consultation event was held at the Tennis Club in May 2024. The existence and location of the Spring Chamber was included in this event, but no details were then available regarding lorry movements etc. Also, importantly, at that stage the work was said to take about 2 weeks rather than the 10/12 weeks now forecasted

In the coming months more information came to light and on 27th November 2024 our MP, Greg Smith, wrote to residents to highlight this and to also spell out the safety risks to pedestrians.

Following this, in January 2025, EKFB/HS2 put out an FAQ leaflet that contained more information and that preceded a drop-in event that was arranged for 19th February 2025.

A meeting was arranged for 6th February 2025 with the Bucks Council, WPC and representatives of the Wendover HS2 mitigation group. It should be noted that, despite two formal requests made by Wendover Parish Council (WPC) and Wendover HS2 Mitigation Action Group (WHS2MAG), EKFB/HS2 refused residents' representatives attendance at this meeting. Subsequently they later invited residents to a meeting held on 11th February 2025.

EKFB/HS2 issued a document titled 'You said we did' on 18th February 2025 (which included their first reference to the drop-in event the following day). The residents' group publicised this event in the absence of EKFB/HS2 publicising it. The event was very well-attended with about 150 people questioning the route for the vehicles to be taken

The planning statement summarises the meeting with residents' representatives on 11th February 2025, in para 6.1.8 saying "Strategies of mitigation were presented by EKFB and HS2 and agreed upon by those attending the meeting". This is simply not true. We did not agree anything, only to agree to disagree. This comment by them is disingenuous.

The residents did inform EKFB/HS2 that they were representing residents and many of those 550 people (at the time – more since) who had already signed a petition objecting to the proposed access route through South Street and Dobbins Lane.

The style of EKFB/HS2's consultation and communications is littered with false and misleading information, designed to confuse residents. They have made claims which have been discredited by their own consultants. Moreover, Greg Smith MP, in his 25th February 2025 letter to Lord Hendy, Rail Minister notes "It is entirely clear that HS2 Ltd has fallen below the standards outlined in the project's own Code of Construction Practice, which includes taking 'precautions in developing the construction programme to reduce disturbance'. This would be achieved through the use of Nash Lee End as an access route, which avoids Dobbins Lane [and of course South Street] entirely, yet this has not even been considered as an option, let alone pursued"

2. Traffic plans

EKFB/HS2 admitted at the 11th February 2025 meeting with three residents that they did not have a traffic management plan. This must have been hastily written and appeared the next day on the 12th February in the planning application. (There is at least one numerical error in their table of vehicular movements.)

It was clear from the meeting that they had given no consideration whatsoever of the safety and congestion issues of HGV's coming along South St and the High St junction.

The planning application also reveals for the first time that in addition to the HGV's there will be a staggering 2280 trips by ancillary support vehicles. All of the above fails the test of compliance with NPPF Section 9 (see below).

3. South St

EKFB/HS2 have shown no regard for the safety of road users along South Street – only mentioning South Street once in para 1.1.5 of their Planning Statement. South Street is always very congested and has a very active pre-school nursery and narrow sloping pavements. Given that South St is a major artery for Wendover traffic the lack of consideration for this is staggering. HS2 seem to have taken the view it's a road so it will be OK.

The omission of South Street traffic management and associated safety issues is a major failing in the planning application and certainly fails the test of compliance with Section 9 of the NPPF (see below)

4. Alternative routes

All along HS2 seem to have assumed that there is only one route to the work site, via South St and Dobbins Lane. Various other options have been identified by them and they claim to have fully investigated these. When challenged though, it is clear that this was only a desk exercise, and no report was made that compared the various routes. EKFB/HS2 afford just 4 lines in their Planning Statement to discount the Nash Lee End option.

EKFB/HS2 are promoting their preferred route — which is clearly the least safe option with their vehicles (HGV and non-HGVs) navigating their way along the narrow and tortuous South Street then across an awkward staggered junction and mini roundabout at the top of the High Street before heading along a congested (mainly with parked cars) Dobbins Lane.

In the FAQ leaflet, EKFB/HS2 have deliberately misled residents by stating, in connection with the Nash Lee End option, that 'we do not have access rights to the land between this highway [Nash Lee End] and the location of the Spring Chamber'. The truth is because HS2 have never asked for access.

The farmer/landowner was contacted by us directly and he confirmed that there was no approach by EKFB/HS2 on this issue. If he had been approached, he would have been receptive to discussing a solution with them. HS2 in an answer to a Freedom of Information (FOI) question confirmed that they had no communications with the farmer concerned.

The Nash Lee End access route is much shorter than the proposed unnecessarily long track running from the Dobbins Lane gate. By all accounts the ground looks every bit as firm, if not firmer, than the

open field parts of the proposed route.

At the meeting with residents EKFB/HS2 conceded that they had only undertaken a 'desk study' of the alternative routes to the Spring Chamber. They had not even walked the alternative option from Nash Lee End – which one of EKFB/HS2's senior staff noted was a single lane with passing places (false: it is a quiet cul de sac with two lanes and only 2 properties along its entire length).

The same EKFB person noted that there was a nursery along Nash Lee End – using this as a counter argument to our concerns about the active pre-school nursery on South Street. Again, EKFB were wrong as the nursery they referred to is on Nash Lee Lane – the other side of the railway and bypass. It became clearer that EKFB/HS2 simply did not know the area/alternative route and had not undertaken any meaningful due diligence.

Prior to the meeting with residents EKFB/HS2 wrote on 7th February 2025, in response to a question about alternative routes "I would like to reassure you that we have thoroughly assessed alternative routes to complete these works". In the light of the above this statement seems at best disingenuous.

As further evidence of inadequate planning EKFB/HS2 advised residents, at their 11th February 2025 meeting that they had no 'Plan B' if their planning application was rejected.

We note that, in addition to Wendover Parish Council, our MP Greg Smith strongly endorses our concerns and, on 25th February 2025, he wrote to the Rail Minister Lord Hendy urging him to *"instruct HS2 to return to the drawing board and consider the alternative options to access the Spring Chamber site"*.

5. Policy Framework

The NPPF9 is a national planning guideline concerning transport issues. (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/9-promoting-sustainable-transport)

The opening paragraph says

"Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, using a vision-led approach to identify transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular places."

We believe that this has been completely overlooked in the application on the basis of a lack of proper analysis of alternative routes, and their consequences for public safety. Hastily written (in 24hrs), travel impacts in the application show that there has been a lack of consideration of the impacts of the HS2 plan.

Moreover, EKFB/HS2's planning application introduces – for the first time – the additional 2280 non-HGV movements through Wendover's residential streets. Additionally, EKFB/HS2's have disregarded the safety of road users along the narrow and tortuous South Street part of the proposed access route. These factors alone are completely at odds with the requirements of Section 9 of NPPF mentioned above.

6. Ecological considerations

EKFB/HS2 cited, in a meeting with three residents on 11th February 2025 that the protected species of newt and bats (in one tree apparently) was a factor in ruling out the viability of accessing the Spring Chamber location from Nash Lee End. The Ecology and Biodiversity report contained within the Planning Application package contradicts this, moreover, it notes that the closest bat roost is approximately 980m to the west of the Spring Chamber site. No evidence of great crested newts was logged, and the general site was deemed to be of negligible importance to the same newt. EKFB/HS2 chose not to repeat this claim in their planning application.

EKFB/HS2, in their FAQs dated around 6th January 2025 cited at the same meeting on the 11th February the presence of several watercourses that had to be bridged if the Nash Lee End option were progressed. They went further to suggest that the construction of such bridges could cost £300k – again a figure they decided not to include in their Planning Statement. Cost is thus not cited as an obstacle.

EKFB/HS2 have cited removal of hedgerows and potentially damaging wildlife habitats as being additional reasons rendering the Nash Lee End access option unviable. Having discussed the farmer's preferred option there is perhaps one metre of hedgerow requiring removal at the road's gated entrance to the field and minimal hedge removal as the alternative track crosses field boundaries. Having looked at the planning application's various detailed engineering drawings the Nash Lee End option seems to have far fewer engineering challenges than the EKFB/HS2 preferred Dobbins Lane access. This may account for why EKFB/HS2 have dropped the 'cost' argument relating to the unviability of the Nash Lee End options.

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If you would like to receive the full critique of the planning application please request it by email to 25inac@gmail.com or text 07905 202021

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT! AND SO PLEASE WRITE TO REGISTER YOUR OBJECTION USING ONE OF THE THREE METHODS DESCRIBED BELOW.

Letter from our MP to the HS2 minister



HOUSE OF COMMONS LONDON SW1A 0AA

Lord Hendy Minister of State for HS2 Department for Transport Great Minster House 33 Horseferry Road London SW1P 4DR

Tuesday 25 February 2025

Dear MI Mendy

It has been brought to my attention that, through a freedom of information request submitted by my constituent Mr. David Cobb, which I have attached, HS2 Ltd has not considered alternative options for accessing the project's spring chamber site in Wendover.

As I explained to you in my previous letter, the project's current proposal to send HGVs down Dobbins Lane and though Wendover town centre is of great concern to my constituents and risks doing huge damage to the local infrastructure.

On top of this, as is clear in the attached document that Mr. Cobb has shared with me, HS2 Ltd is not only ignoring mine and the community's concerns about using Dobbins Lane. The project hasn't even approached the nearby landowner with far less disruptive access to the spring chamber site, despite repeated assurances given to residents and elected representatives to the contrary.

It is therefore entirely clear that HS2 Ltd has fallen below the standards outlined in the project's own Code of Construction Practice, which includes taking "precautions in developing the construction programme to reduce disturbance". This would be achieved through the use of Nash Lee End as an access route, which avoids Dobbins Lane entirely, yet this has not even been considered as an option, let alone pursued.

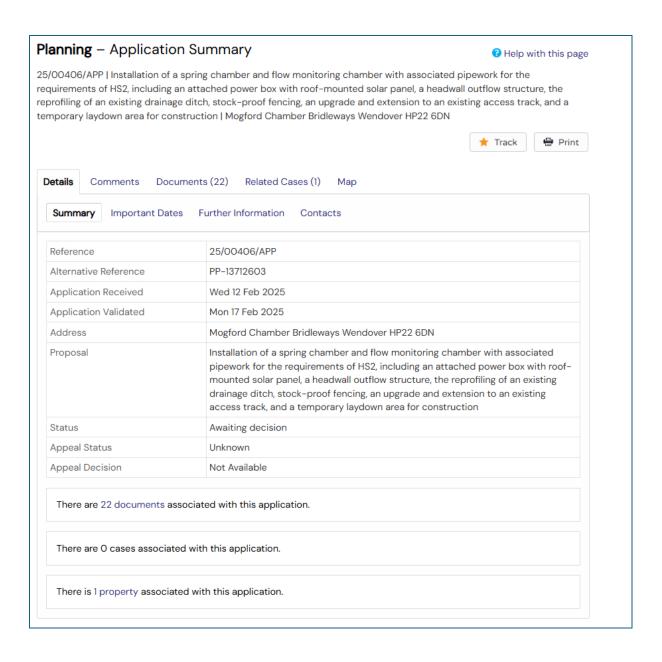
As such, I urge you to step in and instruct HS2 Ltd to return to the drawing board and take seriously all alternative options to access the spring chamber site, lest the project risks inflicting irreparable damage on this community.

Yours sincerely,

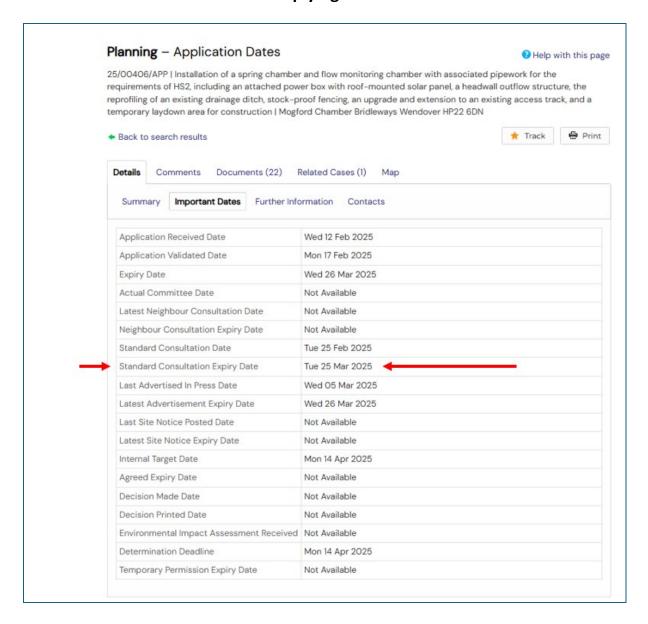
Greg Smith MP

Member of Parliament for Mid Buckinghamshire

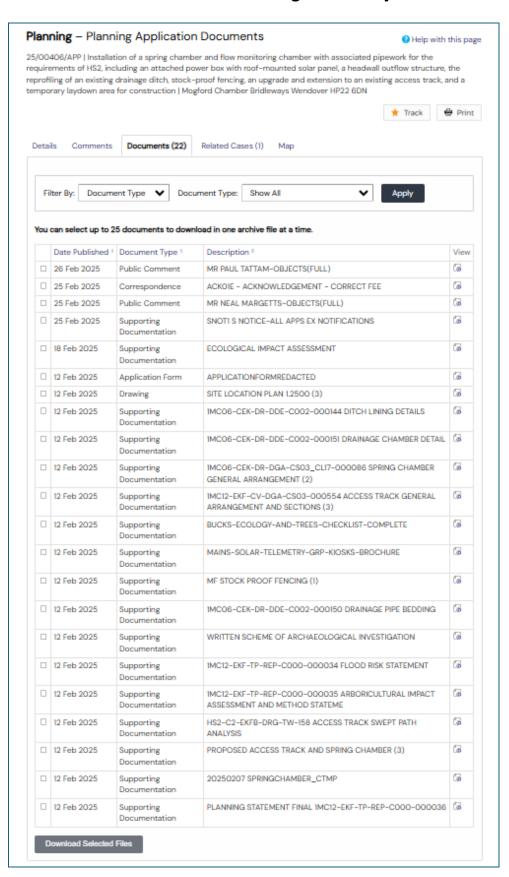
Pages below screen-grabbed off Bucks Planning website.



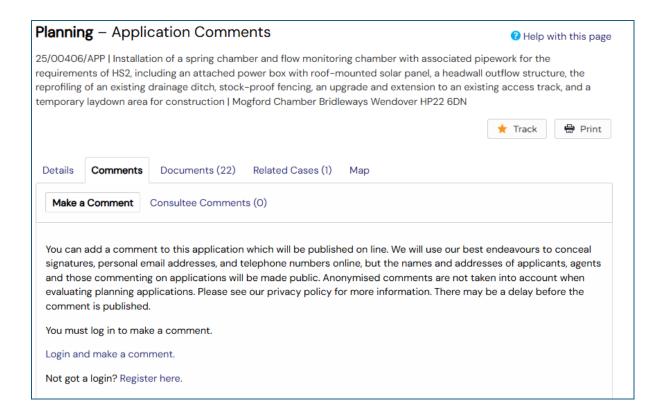
Please note the deadlines for replying below - 25th March 2025



Below shows there are a lot of documents – the most important ones have been commented on lower down – in this guide for objectors



You will need to register before you can leave your comments (objections)



Objectors need to be aware of how they phrase their objections: below, taken from Bucks Planning website, offers some guidance.

Comments we can consider

You can comment on:

- · the adopted 'Development Plan' comprising of:
 - Policies of the Local Plan
 - Core Strategy
 - Neighbourhood Plan
 - Waste and Minerals Plans
- emerging Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans
- supplementary planning documents such as Conservation Appraisals
- the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance
- environmental qualities of the area, visual character and amenity
- loss of light and overshadowing
- overlooking and loss of privacy
- · noise, disturbance and odour
- · loss of trees
- road safety, access, car parking, traffic generation
- flood risk
- case law and previous planning decisions
- climate change and sustainable design and construction
- consideration of what could, otherwise, be undertaken as 'permitted development' without the need for a specific permission

Comments we will not consider

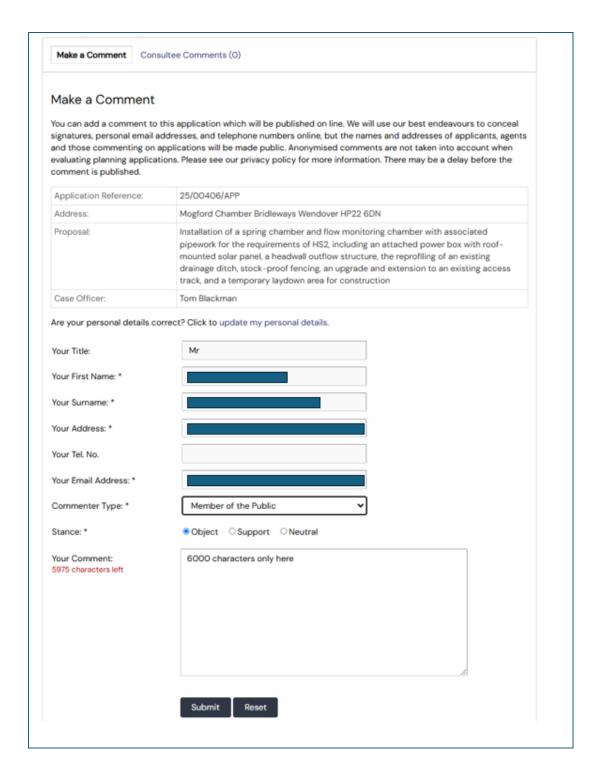
We will not consider comments on:

- moral objections
- the loss of a private view
- property values
- ownership
- · covenants and personal property rights
- other legislation which imposes controls, for example Building Regulations or Environmental Health (although there is some cross over)
- the developer's motives, record or reputation
- unfair competition
- · speculation over future use
- that public consultation hasn't been undertaken prior to making a planning application
- the volume of representations that have been made by the community

What you need to do - if you wish to object ONLINE

(see below for email/post options)

- Go to the planning application's website: CTRL+click on:
 https://publicaccess.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=SRKXYACLIL000&activeTab=summary
- 2. Click on 'comments' and register your name, email, address etc. enter your details below and select from the pull down menu you are a 'member of the public' Make sure you click the 'object' stance! Continued next page..



3. You have 6000 characters to complete the form. That is about 2 x A4 pages of text.

If you can, please fwd/cc to our mailbox at 25inac@gmail.com so we can gauge the level of responses. Thanks.

What you need to do - if you wish to object BY EMAIL

You should try to keep your response to roughly 2 A4 pages AND you can attach files – documents/photos if you like

*Don't forget to put your name and address on the email

PLEASE REMEMBER TO PUT THE PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER IN THE SUBJECT LINE: 25-00406-APP

Send your email to: <u>DevControl.av@buckinghamshire.gov.uk</u>

If you can, please fwd/cc to our mailbox at 25inac@gmail.com so we can gauge the level of responses.

What you need to do - if you wish to object BY POST

For some folks this will be the easiest/only way to reply.

Please sent to this address:

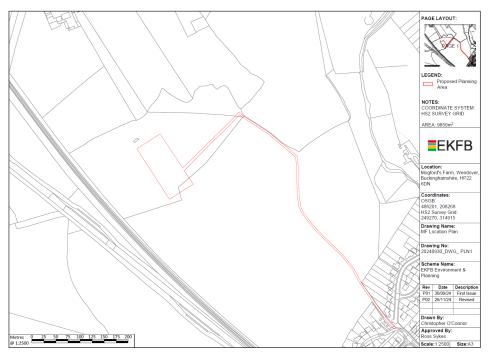
Buckinghamshire Council Planning Department Walton Street Offices Aylesbury HP20 1UK

*Don't forget to put your name and address on the letter

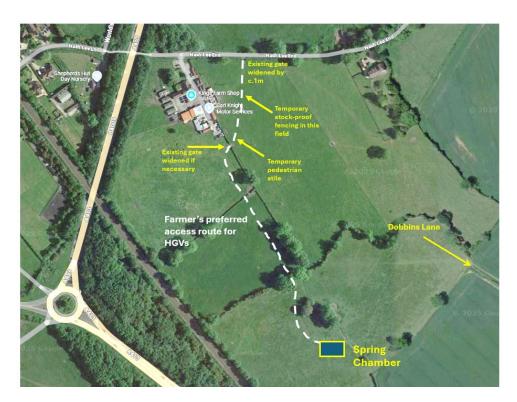
PLEASE REMEMBER TO PUT THE PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER AT THE TOP OF YOUR LETTER (AND ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE ENVELOPE IDEALLY): 25-00406-APP

If you can, please fwd/cc to our mailbox at 25inac@gmail.com so we can gauge the level of responses. You can also send a text to 07905 202021

SPRING CHAMBER ACCESS ROUTES



SPRING CHAMBER SITE LOCATION PLAN – IF ACCESSED FROM DOBBINS LANE (NOTE: NASH LEE END NOT SHOWN – see below)



Safer, shorter, cheaper, less disruptive access route from Nash Lee End (shared with the farmer's approval)

This option is dismissed in just 4 lines in EKFB/HS2's Planning Statement --o00oo--