

PLANNING REF : 250517
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Bodys Farmhouse
: Basingstoke Roa Spencers Wood, Reading
: RG7 1PR
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Bradley Searle
DATE SUBMITTED : 08/04/2025

COMMENTS:

I am objecting to this planning application based on the comments below.

Exacerbation of Existing Flooding Issues

Our property directly borders the fields in question and is situated at a lower elevation. Every year, without exception, the ditch and surrounding area between our garden and the field experience significant flooding evidence of which I have documented with photographs. The proposed development would drastically worsen this issue, as the natural drainage capacity of the land would be severely compromised. With nowhere for the water to disperse, the risk of flooding would increase substantially, posing a direct threat to our property and potentially causing damage to our home

Necessity for a Clear Buffer Zone Between Existing and Proposed housing

The outline planning application indicates that the proposed houses, gardens, paths and play areas would be positioned directly adjacent to existing properties, with no apparent buffer zone. This is wholly unacceptable. It is essential to include a substantial buffer area of dense trees and hedges between all existing properties and the new development so existing gardens and properties are not negatively impacted by noise and being overlooked. It is necessary that a substantial buffer must be incorporated to mitigate the flooding risks outlined above, as well as to prevent significant loss of sunlight, overshadowing, and an unacceptable intrusion on residents' privacy. It is entirely unreasonable to position new homes right up to the boundary when there is ample space within the development site to allow for a more considerate layout. The boundary buffer needs to be a pedestrian/vehicle free area would also help towards BNG and retaining the natural habitats of existing wildlife if it were to border the whole site.

Overdevelopment Beyond the Land's Moderate Suitability

The land has been classified as suitable for moderate development, yet the proposal for 420 homes plus associated facilities far exceeds this classification. This scale of development is disproportionate and wholly inappropriate for the area, which has already experienced significant expansion over the past decade. Such excessive growth not only erodes the character and quality of life for existing residents but also places an unsustainable burden on local infrastructure, which is already struggling to cope. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that this land was not included within the local plan, raising further concerns about the justification for this development.

Existing Sewage Issues Worsened by Recent Developments

Over the past decade, substantial local development has already had a severe impact on the area's sewage capacity. During periods of heavy or sustained rainfall, the system becomes immediately overwhelmed, unable to cope with the excess water. As a direct consequence, we have personally experienced drainage failures, including instances where our own drains ceased to function correctly. Last year, this resulted in a persistent stream of water running down the entrance to our property and into the fields. Introducing yet another large-scale development will only exacerbate the problem. Thames Water also have concerns which it seems the developers have not addressed so far.

Rising Anti-Social Behaviour and the Need for Consideration

Since the large-scale developments off Hyde End Road and Shinfield, there has been a marked increase in anti-social behaviour in the area something that was not previously an issue. Many residents have directly experienced or witnessed these disturbances, which have now escalated to the point where the Police have had to impose three recent Dispersal Orders. This demonstrates a clear and growing problem. Approving this excessive development will significantly expand Spencers Wood, and there are genuine concerns that it will further contribute to rising levels of anti-social behaviour and crime, putting additional pressure on both the community and Police resources.

Road Safety Concerns at Bodys Farmhouse Access

The existing entrance to Bodys Farm is a shared access route used regularly by both the residents of Bodys Farmhouse and the farmer, over which the residents have a legal right of way. However, the proposed development includes a public footpath and cycle path positioned alarmingly close to this entrance, raising serious safety concerns. There is a genuine risk that pedestrians may inadvertently enter the access point, creating a hazardous situation especially when vehicles are in use. It is evident that this issue has not been adequately considered within the proposal, and proper measures must be taken to ensure the safety of both residents and the public.

Proximity to AWE and Emergency Evacuation Concerns

The proposed development site falls within the Evacuation Zone of the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE), an area subject to emergency evacuation plans in the event of a fire or radiation leak. A critical concern is that current evacuation routes direct traffic towards AWE rather than away from it, creating a potentially hazardous situation in an emergency. This serious oversight must be addressed before any further development is considered.

Worsening Traffic Congestion and Highway Safety Concerns

The significant developments in Spencers Wood and Shinfield have already placed immense strain on local roads, particularly the Basingstoke Road, where traffic congestion is now a daily issue. At peak times, gridlock can bring traffic to a standstill, often forcing residents to abandon journeys altogether. The situation is further worsened by excessive on-street and pavement parking, which not only reduces road capacity but also creates hazardous conditions for both drivers and pedestrians.

As someone who regularly uses the Basingstoke Road, I have found it increasingly difficult to safely exit onto it due to high traffic

volumes and restricted visibility caused by parked vehicles. Given that most households now own two or more cars, the additional load from this development would overwhelm an already struggling road network. It is clear that the existing highway system simply cannot accommodate this level of expansion safely or efficiently.

Inadequate Secondary School Provision

The development plan includes a new primary school, despite Spencers Wood already having an existing one. This raises concerns about whether the proposed education provision aligns with the community's actual needs. What the area desperately lacks is a high-quality secondary school.

The nearest secondary school recently received the worst possible Ofsted rating and has limited physical capacity. As a direct consequence, my own child along with many others will have to attend a school miles away from Spencers Wood. This places additional strain on families, increases traffic congestion due to longer school commutes, and highlights a serious gap in local infrastructure. Any large-scale development must address this fundamental issue by prioritizing a suitable secondary school rather than duplicating existing primary provision.

Environmental Impact and Threat to Local Wildlife

The proposed development site is home to several protected and endangered species, including red kites, bats, and badgers, all of which are legally safeguarded under conservation laws. These species are regularly seen in my garden and the surrounding fields, and there is significant concern about the destruction of their natural habitat. As a result of previous developments, we've witnessed a growing number of animals migrating to areas with remaining green space, ticularly these fields. With this new development and the recently approved solar farm, the available natural habitat for these species will be drastically reduced, severely limiting their ability to thrive in the area. This development would mean a loss of good arable land which until this year was being used to grown crops. This contradicts the government policy to increase domestic food production and boost food security by 2050.