

PLANNING REF : 251310
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Shaw Cottage
: Bunces Shaw Road, Farley Hill, Reading, Hants
: RG7 1UU
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Christopher Scarlett
DATE SUBMITTED : 24/06/2025

COMMENTS:

I respectfully request that Wokingham Borough Council undertakes a full Environmental Impact Assessment given the significant impact any further development of Blackcroft Farm (planning application 232315) will have on biodiversity, traffic increase, and character of a high-quality landscape area (LCA).

Application 232315 has been submitted by a for-profit land promotion company based in Bristol, Rubix Land. It has no sensitivity to the local Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan or the identity and rural setting of the hamlet of Farley Hill. It is also misleading to suggest that Blackcroft Farm is in Arborfield when the address of the industrial estate is Church Road, Farley Hill. There are several companies based at this site who also list their address as Church Road, Farley Hill.

There are several sites allocated for urbanisation in this area, Arborfield SDL is already one of four strategic development locations defined by Wokingham Borough Council to take the bulk of new housing development in the borough over the period to 2027. Currently the settlements in the area are naturally separated by the A327 from the Arborfield Green SDL. Planning application 232315 for further development of Blackcroft Farm sets a dangerous precedent for the continued expansion of Arborfield into a protected landscape, specifically eroding the character and appearance of the hamlet of Farley Hill.

There are several protected aspects of the landscape within 'Land at Blackcroft Farm', such as Ancient woodland and TPOs and the site is in the landscape character area known as 'Farley Wooded Sand and Gravel Hill'. The presence of Westwood Copse alone means the site is environmentally sensitive and requires a full Environmental Impact Assessment. Regardless of the amount of care a construction company takes, these aspects of the countryside will be destroyed.

It is also notable that a much smaller, retrospective, planning application for expansion of the Blackcroft Farm industrial zone was refused by Wokingham Borough Council on appeal earlier this year on a number of issues, including environmental (ref APP/X0360/W/24/3351397). The addition of 650 dwellings and an expansion of Blackcroft Farm Industrial site will magnify the inappropriateness of this proposed development.

It is also notable that a significant amount of the housing that is planned in the borough is already earmarked for this area and if the Environmental Impact Assessment does not take this into account, it also sets a precedent for this area to be swamped with further developments which are wholly unsustainable.