

Canberra Lake Way

Charvil

READING

RG10 9DH

8 June 2026

Planning Application 253071

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to lodge a formal objection to the proposed development in its revised form, specifically the inclusion of a pedestrian footpath linking the new Bellway development to Canberra Lake Way (CLW), and the failure to deliver the ten-metre landscape buffer originally promised by Hicks Developments.

First of all, I must acknowledge that there have been certain improvements from the original Layout Plan, the removal of multiple car-parking spots next to current residents' rear fences, and the introduction of a buffer of sorts. However, the buffer in question is wholly inadequate and is one of two main objections I'd like to raise.

Failure to Deliver the Promised Ten-Metre Landscape Buffer

When CLW homes were purchased, Hicks Developments publicly committed to installing a **ten-metre-wide landscape buffer** behind the properties. This commitment:

- Was part of the original planning application
- Was highlighted as part of the original sales and marketing campaign for Canberra Lake Way.
- Was known to Bellway at the point of land purchase

Below is an image from the aforementioned Marketing brochure from 2021 highlighting what was being sold as part of the purchase:



The revised Bellway layout plans propose a buffer as narrow as **1.5 metres** in certain places, which is wholly inadequate for:

- Screening
- Privacy
- Biodiversity
- Compliance with the Charvil Neighbourhood Plan (supported by 91% of residents in the May 2026 referendum)

A 1.5-metre strip cannot support meaningful planting or mature trees. If the full ten metres cannot be delivered, the buffer must at minimum be **uniform around the Canberra Lake Way** at its widest proposed minimum width (approximately five metres) to ensure fairness to all affected residents.

I have taken the time to speak with two tree surgeons who provided a **general opinion** that there are three main reasons why a minimum of **5 metres** is essential to maintaining a viable boundary buffer.

- Ensures flexibility for a variety of trees to be planted without having roots affect any boundary fencing.
- Provides a wide enough area for maintenance of the planted trees either through care or ability to re-plant if required.
- Prevents overhanging of branches into gardens, not only for current residents, but future residents as well.

I struggle to understand why this is so difficult to implement as there are no tree prevention orders for the entirety of the Sonning Golf Club boundary. Surely, small boundaries of between

1.5-3m will result in foliage that doesn't offer enough privacy, a likelihood of trees dying out through lack of space or maintenance and would provide an overhanging nuisance to **new residents** as well as existing ones.

As the above was given as a general opinion and not specifically related to this development, I would urge a professional valuation to be undertaken to ascertain and confirm this minimum width required for adequate, maintainable planting.

Introduction of Footpath Link

I won't spend too much time on this as the multitude of comments already submitted prove that this is an obvious objection to make. My points are that a new footpath would:

- Provide a concealed escape route
- Increase opportunistic crime and anti-social behaviour
- Reduce natural surveillance

Charvil has already seen recent car thefts and break-ins. This proposal would make matters worse.

Whilst I accept that the development of these 75 houses must go ahead, I therefore respectfully request that the Council **refuse** the application unless and until:

1. The footpath connection to Canberra Lake Way is **removed**, and
2. The landscape buffer is delivered at the originally promised ten-metre width, or at minimum a uniform width sufficient to provide effective screening and biodiversity value.

The residents of Canberra Lake Way have built a safe, stable, and thriving community. The proposed changes would irreversibly harm that environment for no demonstrable public benefit.

Yours faithfully,

Matthew Bowler