

PLANNING REF : 261059
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 10 Oak Drive
: Arborfield Green
: RG2 9GJ
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Kirsty Pearson
DATE SUBMITTED : 19/05/2026

COMMENTS:

I would like to formally object to this planning application.

I have lived in this area for nearly 10 years and during that time I have watched more and more green space disappear around Barkham and Arborfield. The cumulative impact of development is now impossible to ignore. The countryside around us is steadily being eroded and the character of the area is changing beyond recognition.

One of the reasons people choose to live here is because Barkham and Arborfield still feel like distinct villages separated by open countryside. That separation is rapidly disappearing. Developments such as this are steadily forcing the villages to merge into one continuous suburban area, permanently destroying the rural setting and identity that make this part of Wokingham special.

What was once a rural edge between villages is steadily becoming an extended suburban corridor. The gradual urbanisation of Barkham and Arborfield is happening piece by piece, through developments that individually may appear manageable but collectively are transforming the area beyond recognition.

I also find it increasingly difficult to understand how the area can continue to be promoted as a "garden village" while so much green space is being lost to housing development. A genuine garden village should protect and prioritise green infrastructure, wildlife and open landscapes not replace them with continuous large-scale development.

While features such as allotments and landscaped areas may be presented as environmental benefits, they are not an equivalent replacement for established countryside, natural habitats and open green space. Managed recreational land does not offset the long-term environmental damage caused by large-scale construction, habitat loss and the continued urbanisation of the area.

This application cannot be viewed in isolation. The cumulative impact of the huge amount of development already approved and proposed in the area is becoming overwhelming. With the proposed solar farm due to be built on the opposite side of Commonfield Lane replacing fields where cows previously grazed yet more open countryside will disappear. While renewable energy and housing both have their place, there has to be a limit to how much rural land can be lost before the area is fundamentally and permanently altered.

My concern is not just this application in isolation, but the cumulative effect of continual development across Barkham and Arborfield over many years. Residents are repeatedly told that each individual development will have only a limited impact, yet the

overall reality on the ground tells a very different story.

Taken together, the scale of housing growth, infrastructure projects and loss of countryside is fundamentally changing the character, capacity and environmental quality of the area. At some point, the cumulative impact itself becomes unacceptable.

The environmental impact of continual development is also being seriously underestimated. The remaining green spaces around Barkham and Arborfield provide important habitats and wildlife corridors for local species, including deer which are regularly seen moving through these fields. Every new development fragments those habitats further. Once this land is built on, it is gone forever.

I am also aware that Great Crested Newts have previously been identified in this area. This became an issue during works to our own property extension, where ecological considerations relating to Great Crested Newts had to be taken into account. Their known presence locally raises serious concerns about the continued destruction and fragmentation of wildlife habitats through repeated development.

There is also a significant bat population in the area, with bats regularly seen around nearby fields, trees and hedgerows, particularly during the warmer months and at dusk. The loss of open land, mature vegetation and dark green corridors will inevitably disrupt feeding and commuting routes for these protected species.

Given the scale of development already taking place around Barkham and Arborfield, I do not believe sufficient weight is being given to the long-term ecological damage being caused across the area. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that planning decisions should protect and enhance the natural environment, minimise impacts on biodiversity, recognise the intrinsic beauty and character of the countryside, and support protected species and habitats. In my opinion, the continued loss of green space in this area directly conflicts with those objectives.

Infrastructure is another major issue and local services are already struggling to cope with the level of development that has already taken place.

Residents have repeatedly been assured that infrastructure would keep pace with development, yet local experience increasingly suggests the opposite. Schools remain oversubscribed, GP services are overstretched, roads are congested and public services are under growing pressure.

Approving further large-scale development without clear evidence that infrastructure deficiencies have first been resolved risks placing even greater strain on existing communities and undermines the principles of sustainable development set out within the NPPF.

Local schools are already oversubscribed and many families cannot secure places nearby. Additional housing will inevitably mean even more children unable to access local schools, forcing parents to drive further afield every day. That is neither sustainable nor realistic and will add further pressure to roads that are already

eavily congested at peak times.

The same applies to healthcare. Residents already struggle to obtain GP appointments and NHS dental care locally, yet development continues at a relentless pace without any meaningful increase in healthcare provision. There is little evidence that the infrastructure required to support these growing communities is being delivered alongside the housing.

Traffic in and around Barkham and Arborfield has already increased substantially in recent years and local roads are struggling to cope. Congestion around schools and key junctions is already a daily issue. Some roads in the area still have not been adopted by Wokingham Borough Council, creating ongoing problems around maintenance, traffic regulation and enforcement. Residents already experience speeding vehicles, unsafe driving and worsening air pollution. This development will add even more vehicles to roads that are already over capacity.

Increased traffic will inevitably worsen noise levels and air pollution for existing residents, particularly around schools and residential roads already experiencing congestion and queuing traffic.

Pedestrian and cycling infrastructure has also failed to keep pace with development. There are routes in the area that still feel unsafe for children walking to school or for residents attempting to cycle instead of drive. Without proper infrastructure in place, additional housing simply increases car dependency and traffic congestion.

Flooding and drainage are already a concern in the local area and further development on green fields will inevitably make the situation worse. These open spaces currently absorb significant amounts of rainwater naturally. Replacing them with roads, paving and housing reduces drainage capacity and increases surface water runoff, placing additional strain on drainage systems that already struggle during periods of heavy rainfall. Residents should not be expected to accept an increased flood risk as a consequence of continual overdevelopment.

The impact of construction should also not be dismissed. Large-scale developments bring years of construction traffic, noise, dust and disruption to roads already heavily used by families and school traffic. The cumulative impact on residents' quality of life is considerable.

The Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan includes objectives to protect the character of the area, improve safety, reduce speeding and traffic impacts, and preserve the identity of local communities. In my view, this proposal directly under mines those aims and contributes further to the steady urbanisation of what was once a rural area.

Many residents no longer have confidence that the promised balance between housing growth, infrastructure and environmental protection is actually being delivered. What people experience day-to-day is

increasing congestion, pressure on services and the steady loss of countryside, while the character of the area continues to change at an alarming pace.

Overall, this application represents yet another example of overdevelopment in an area where roads, schools, healthcare and infrastructure are already struggling to cope. The continued loss of countryside between Barkham and Arborfield is devastating for many long-term residents who chose to live here because of its rural character, open landscapes and wildlife.

For all of these reasons, I strongly object to this application and respectfully ask the Council to refuse planning permission.