

PLANNING REF : 251310
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Farley Hill Farm
: Church Lane, Farley Hill, Reading, Berkshire
: RG7 1UP
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Harry Cannon
DATE SUBMITTED : 15/06/2025

COMMENTS:

I am writing to formally request that the proposed development of 650 residential units on almost 100 acres of Green Belt land at Blackcroft Farm beside the A327 Reading Road at Farley Hill which includes

ancient woodland, established ponds, and lies in close proximity to a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) be subject to a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)

Regulations 2017.

This proposal qualifies as a Schedule 2 development, involving an urban development project on a site over 5 hectares, and is likely to have significant environmental effects due to its size, nature, and sensitive location.

I urge Wokingham Council to issue a positive screening opinion for the following reasons:

1. Proximity to Environmentally Sensitive Sites

The proposed development lies near a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), raising concerns about potential adverse effects such as habitat disturbance, hydrological changes, and increased recreational and developmental pressure.

2. Presence of Ancient Woodland

The site contains ancient woodland, a nationally important and irreplaceable habitat, and the development poses risks of habitat fragmentation, pollution, over-use and long-term degradation, which can only be properly assessed through a full EIA.

3. Ecological Value of On-Site Ponds

The existing ponds on the site provide critical aquatic habitats and may support protected species such as great crested newts, amphibians, bats, and other wildlife. The EIA process is essential to conduct detailed ecological surveys and ensure adequate protection and mitigation.

4. Development on Green Belt Land

The site is located within the Green Belt, which exists to restrict urban sprawl, maintain the openness of the countryside, and protect the setting of rural communities. A development of this scale would fundamentally undermine the function and purpose of this Green Belt area.

5. Valued Rural Landscape Surrounding Farley Hill

Part of the proposed site falls within a valued landscape setting surrounding the small rural village of Farley Hill. This area is recognized for its visual, cultural, and environmental importance to local character and identity. The proposed development would

represent a major intrusion into this tranquil rural environment, eroding local distinctiveness, creating a continuous connection to the huge Arborfield development and altering the village's setting negatively and irreversibly.

6. Cumulative and Long-Term Impacts

The scale of the proposal, combined with potential future developments, raises substantial concerns over cumulative impacts such as:

- o Traffic congestion
- o Air and water pollution
- o Loss of carbon sinks
- o Infrastructure strain

- o Disturbance to ecological networks

Only a comprehensive EIA can properly assess and address these concerns in an open, transparent, and scientifically sound manner

Conclusion

Considering the site's location within a valued Green Belt landscape, the presence of irreplaceable habitats, and its proximity to protected ecological assets, I strongly urge the Council to require a full Environmental Impact Assessment. This is vital to ensure that all environmental implications are properly understood and publicly scrutinized before any planning decisions are made.