

PLANNING REF : 260774
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 34 St Legers Way
: Riseley, Hampshire
: RG71GH
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Adam Kidd
DATE SUBMITTED : 07/05/2026

COMMENTS:

I write to formally object to Planning Application 260774, which seeks consent for the development of up to 44 dwellings on land north of Sun Lane, Riseley.

This objection is made on clear material planning grounds, drawing upon national and adopted local planning policy. For the reasons set out below, the proposal represents unsustainable, harmful and unjustified development and should be refused.

1. Unsustainable Location - Conflict with the Local Plan and NPPF

Riseley is clearly identified as a small rural settlement / minor settlement with very limited services, facilities and public transport provision. The proposed scale of development is fundamentally at odds with the settlement's role and function.

Paragraphs 8, 11 and 78 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) require development to be genuinely sustainable, directing significant growth to locations with adequate infrastructure, services and sustainable transport choices. This proposal fails that test.

The development would:

- Be highly car dependent, due to the lack of shops, schools, employment and healthcare within walking distance
- Rely on an infrequent and limited bus service (predominantly to Reading only)
- Exacerbate rural isolation rather than promote sustainable patterns of growth

This directly conflicts with Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development)), which seeks to focus development in locations with appropriate infrastructure and accessibility.

This proposal is also contrary to the emerging Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update including Policy SS1 (Sustainable development principles), SS2 (Settlement Hierarchy) and Policy C1 (Active & Sustainable Transport/Accessibility), which restrict significant growth in smaller rural settlements where it would undermine sustainability objectives and settlement character.

2. Lack of Infrastructure Capacity (Schools, Healthcare, Services)

There is no evidence that local infrastructure can accommodate an additional 44 households.

Residents already experience:

- Over subscribed GP and dental services
- Significant pressure on school places
- No village shop or essential services within Riseley itself

The NPPF (Paragraphs 20 and 92) requires development to be supported by adequate social and community infrastructure. No clear or funded mitigation is presented to address these shortfalls.

The cumulative effect of recent housing growth in and around Riseley has already placed severe strain on local services, with no commensurate investment. This proposal would worsen that imbalance. The proposal also conflicts with the emerging Local Plan Update Policies HC2 (Community Infrastructure) and SS15 (Securing Infrastructure) which require developments to demonstrate that essential infrastructure (including healthcare, education and utilities) are either in place or can be delivered in step with development.

3. Highway Safety and Traffic Impact

The proposal raises serious highway safety concerns, particularly in relation to Sun Lane, Bull Lane and the B3349 (Basingstoke Road).

Key issues include:

- Narrow, single track rural lanes
- Poor visibility at junctions
- Access points located in or near high speed sections of road
- Conflict with pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and farm traffic
- Existing congestion at peak times, particularly near the A33

The development is likely to generate 80-90 additional vehicles, materially intensifying use of sub standard access points. This conflicts with Core Strategy Policy CP6 (Managing Travel Demand) and NPPF Paragraphs 110 and 111, which require development to be safe, suitable and not give rise to unacceptable impacts on highway safety.

It is also highly relevant that access arrangements in close proximity have previously been rejected, establishing a clear planning precedent. This proposal also conflicts with emerging Local Plan Update Policy C2 (Mitigation of transport impacts and highways safety and design), which seeks to minimise car dependency and ensure development is safely accessible by a range of users. Paragraph 3.8 in particular is noted "Action is required to combat the effects of climate change. Key to that will be locating most of the new development in locations that reduce car dependency and provide opportunities to make walking, cycling and public transport a viable, attractive and easy option."

4. Flood Risk, Surface Water Drainage and Ground Conditions

Despite claims within the application, local evidence demonstrates that:

- The site experiences surface water run off
- Nearby lanes frequently flood or become waterlogged
- The land plays a key role in absorbing rainfall and A33 run off

The proposed increase in hard surfacing would worsen flood risk to:

- Sun Lane and Bull Lane
- Surrounding properties at lower ground levels

- Downstream areas in Riseley and Swallowfield

This is contrary to NPPF Paragraphs 170-182 and Core Strategy Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development), which require development to avoid increasing flood risk elsewhere. The submitted drainage strategy fails to demonstrate long term effectiveness or resilience. The proposal also conflicts with emerging Local Plan Update Policies FD1-FD3 (Flooding and Drainage) which require robust evidence that development will not increase surface water or sewer flooding risk within or beyond the site.

5. Foul Drainage and Water Supply Infrastructure

There is compelling local evidence of existing sewerage and water supply problems, including:

- Sewage overflows and tanker use in Riseley and Swallowfield - Low water pressure reported by residents
- Thames Water capacity constraints already acknowledged

The application fails to demonstrate that existing infrastructure can support the proposed development, contrary to NPPF Paragraph 20 and Core Strategy Policy CP4.

Recent appeal decisions elsewhere in the Borough have required robust, pre commencement conditions where infrastructure adequacy was uncertain. No such certainty exists here. This also conflicts with emerging Local Plan Update Policies C8 (Utilities), CE3 (Environmental Standards for Residential Development) and HC5 (Environmental Protection).

6. Harm to Rural Character and Landscape

The site forms part of a distinct rural landscape, characterised by:

- Open fields
- Mature hedgerows
- Proximity to woodland and ecological corridors

Developing 44 dwellings would represent urbanising overdevelopment, fundamentally altering the character of this part of Riseley. This conflicts with Core Strategy Policy CP3 (General Principles for Development), NPPF Paragraphs 131-136 and 187, which seek to protect local character and countryside and the emerging Local Plan Update Policies SS5 (Development in the Countryside), which seek to protect rural landscape character and prevent suburban encroachment into the countryside.

7. Ecology, Biodiversity and Protected Species

The site supports a wide range of wildlife, including bats, birds of prey, owls, deer and other protected species, including red-listed bird species (amongst which cuckoos and marsh tits) and functions as part of a wider ecological corridor.

Under NPPF Paragraphs 187 and 192 and the Environment Act 2021,

development must avoid biodiversity harm and deliver net gains. The information submitted fails to provide sufficient assurance that:

- Protected species would not be harmed
- Ecological corridors would be retained
- Biodiversity net gain would genuinely be achieved

The proposal therefore remains premature and unjustified.

This is also contrary to emerging Local Plan Update Policies NE1 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity), NE2 (Biodiversity net gain) and NE5 (Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows), which seek to protect ecological networks and irreplaceable habitats.

8. Precedent and Cumulative Impact

Approval of this application would set an undesirable precedent, making it increasingly difficult to resist further speculative development in the countryside. When assessed alongside recent and consented schemes, the cumulative impact on Riseley's infrastructure, character and environment would be severe. The emerging Local Plan Update seeks to manage growth in a coordinated and plan led manner; approval of unallocated sites in minor settlements would undermine this strategy.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, the proposal clearly conflicts with both national and local planning policy and would result in significant and demonstrable harm in terms of sustainability, highway safety, flooding, infrastructure capacity, ecology and rural character. It is therefore respectfully requested that Planning Application 260774 be refused.