

PLANNING REF : 261695
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 10 Hart Dyke Close
: Wokingham, United Kingdom
: RG41 2HQ
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs June Slatter
DATE SUBMITTED : 28/08/2026

COMMENTS:

June Slatter
10 Hart Dyke Close RG41 2HQ

Objection to Planning Application 261695 - Proposed Sports Pitches
by Luckley House School

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to formally object to planning application 261695 for the proposed development of the rural field obtained by Luckley House School as playing fields.

I live directly opposite the proposed sports field, and therefore I would be one of the residents most directly affected by this development. My concerns are not theoretical. The proposed change would be immediately visible from my home and would have a direct impact on the outlook, peace and enjoyment of my property and garden. I currently look across an open area of countryside. I am extremely concerned that this would be replaced by a formal sports facility with a cricket pitch and two rugby pitches, substantial fencing and very high netting, together with the noise and activity associated with organised sport.

For these reasons, I strongly object to the application.

1. The proposed development would fundamentally change the outlook from my home

Living directly opposite the proposed sports field means that I would have a clear and immediate view of the development.

At present, the field provides an open and peaceful outlook. It is part of the character of the area and provides a sense of space between the school and the surrounding homes.

The proposal would fundamentally change that.

The proposed 3.5-metre acoustic fence, together with a further 6.5 metres of netting, would create a structure of potentially around 9.5 metres in height directly opposite neighbouring residential properties.

This would be an enormous visual change from the existing open field. From my perspective, this would not simply be a sports pitch in a field. It would introduce a substantial man-made structure into what is currently an open rural landscape.

I am particularly concerned about the loss of the open outlook that I currently enjoy from my home and garden. The proposed fencing and netting would become a dominant feature of that outlook and would create a significant sense of enclosure.

I do not believe this level of visual intrusion is appropriate immediately opposite residential properties.

2. The proposed sports field would have a direct impact on my home. Because my property is directly opposite the field, I am particularly concerned about the noise and activity that would be generated.

Sport is not a silent activity. There would potentially be:

- players and children shouting;
- coaches and teachers giving instructions;

- appeals and calls between players;

- ball impacts;
- whistles and general sporting activity;
- spectators;
- visiting teams and coaches; and
- maintenance and groundskeeping equipment.

This would represent a significant change from the current environment.

I am also concerned that the use of the facility may extend beyond normal school hours. If outside organisations are permitted to use the facilities, there could be evening, weekend and school-holiday activity.

A proper noise assessment should therefore consider the actual and reasonably foreseeable use of the facility, including evenings, weekends, visiting teams and external/community use.

3. Cricket-ball safety is a particular concern because I live directly opposite the pitch

This is one of my most significant personal concerns.

My property is directly opposite the proposed cricket pitch, meaning that I would be among the properties most exposed to any cricket balls that escaped the playing area.

A cricket ball can travel at considerable speed and over a considerable distance. It is not difficult to imagine balls entering gardens or striking windows, greenhouses or people. If a match was taking place, I would fear being injured and so would not go outside. The application should therefore demonstrate, with proper technical evidence, that the proposed fencing and netting will provide reliable protection for neighbouring properties, rather than simply assuming that the proposed measures will be sufficient.

I am also concerned about the apparent conflict between the need for netting to prevent cricket balls escaping and the need to prevent birds and bats from becoming trapped in the netting.

Both issues need to be addressed properly before permission is granted.

4. The scale of the proposed fencing and netting is excessive for a residential setting

I am particularly concerned by the proposed combination of a 3.5-metre acoustic fence and 6.5 metres of netting.

From the perspective of someone whose home is directly opposite the field, this would be an extremely imposing structure.

The current open field would effectively be replaced by a large enclosed sporting environment.

I believe the visual impact on neighbouring homes has been underestimated.

It is important that the council considers what this structure will actually look and feel like from the windows and gardens of residents who face it every day, rather than simply considering the fencing as a necessary piece of sports infrastructure on a site plan.

For me, this would be a permanent and highly visible change to my everyday surroundings.

5. The field is important countryside and supports wildlife

The field is currently an open area of countryside and provides habitat for a range of wildlife.

Residents regularly see deer, foxes, badgers and birds, and the site supports bats, owls, slow worms, grass snakes and newts.

I am concerned that turning the field into intensively managed sports pitches would significantly disturb this environment through mowing, construction, fencing, netting, increased people and noise,

and potentially future lighting.

The proposed netting is of particular concern because of the potential impact on birds and bats.

I believe comprehensive, up-to-date ecological surveys should be carried out before any decision is made, including appropriate surveys for bats, breeding birds, reptiles, amphibians and badgers.

6. The previous planning history should be given significant weight

The field has previously been the subject of proposals for development and was designated as protected open countryside in 2019.

The relevant planning history includes:

- PA170261
- PA190286
- APP/X0360/W/19/3235572

The previous proposal for housing was dismissed at appeal.

I appreciate that the current application is for a different use.

However, the previous decision and the reasons for protecting the openness and character of this land remain highly relevant.

The current proposal would still result in a substantial change to the character and appearance of the field.

I do not believe the applicant has demonstrated a compelling reason why this protected open area now needs to be developed, particularly when there is significant new sporting provision being developed at Gray's Farm, less than a mile away.

7. Drainage and flooding

The field regularly becomes very wet during the winter.

There have been occasions when substantial areas of standing water have formed, at times resembling a small lake, and I have seen ducks swimming in the field.

I am concerned that the introduction of formal sports pitches, construction works and any associated drainage infrastructure could alter the natural movement and storage of surface water.

The council should therefore require proper technical evidence showing what happens to the water currently held by the field and where it will go following development.

This should include consideration of extreme rainfall events and whether there could be any increased risk to neighbouring properties.

8. Trees and boundary vegetation
The mature trees along the boundary are also an important part of the existing character and provide valuable screening.

I understand that substantial foundations may be required for the proposed fencing and netting.

I am concerned that construction close to these trees could damage their roots and affect their long-term health.

A detailed tree survey and arboricultural impact assessment should therefore be required, together with clear details of construction methods and root protection.

9. Concern about future intensification

I am also concerned about what this development could eventually become.

The school's website refers to the provision of a pavilion in due course.

While I appreciate that a future application would have to be considered separately, it is reasonable for residents to be concerned that the current proposal could be the first stage of a much more intensive sporting facility.

This could potentially lead to:

- a pavilion or clubhouse;
- floodlighting;
- evening and weekend use;
- additional buildings and hardstanding;
- increased parking; and

- significantly more traffic and visitors.

As someone living directly opposite the proposed sports field, I am particularly concerned that the development could gradually result in a much more intensive use of the site than currently exists.

10. Traffic and parking

I am also concerned about the additional vehicle movements that could result from the proposal.

If the facilities are used by outside organisations, visiting teams, spectators and coaches could arrive during evenings and weekends.

The council should therefore consider the realistic level of use and assess parking, access, traffic movements and highway safety rather than assuming that the impact will be minimal.

Conclusion

I strongly object to planning application 261695.

I live directly opposite the field, and I am particularly concerned about the effect this development would have on my home and garden. The proposal would replace an open area of countryside with an intensively used sports facility and a substantial combination of acoustic fencing and netting. The proposed structure would be highly visible from my property and would fundamentally change the outlook that I currently enjoy.

I am also very concerned about the increased noise and activity, particularly if the facilities are used by outside organisations during evenings and weekends, as well as the very real safety concern presented by cricket balls travelling towards neighbouring properties.

In addition, there are serious concerns regarding the impact on wildlife, drainage and surface water, mature trees, traffic and the potential for future intensification of the site.

I respectfully ask the council to refuse planning application 261695. If the council is minded to approve the application, I ask that it first requires comprehensive and independently verifiable assessments covering ecology, noise, cricket-ball safety, trees and arboriculture, drainage and flood risk, traffic and highways, together with a clear assessment of the visual impact of the proposed fencing and netting on the homes immediately surrounding the site.

I also ask that the council gives proper weight to the site's protected countryside status, the previous planning appeal decision and the availability of other sporting facilities nearby. For those of us who live directly opposite the proposed development, this is not an abstract planning issue. It would result in a permanent and highly visible change to our homes, gardens and everyday surroundings.

I therefore strongly urge the council to refuse this application and protect the open countryside and residential environment that currently exists.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my objection.

Yours faithfully,

June Slatter