

PLANNING REF: 261695

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 57 Kiln Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham

SUBMITTED BY: Archita Raj

DATE SUBMITTED: 04/09/2026

COMMENTS:

This is with regards to PA 261694 - plans for using countryside for Luckey house sports facilities .

This summer has served as a severe warning of the growing impact of climate change and the importance of protecting the green spaces that help absorb rainfall, support wildlife, reduce heat and provide a vital buffer against further urbanisation. At a time when these spaces are becoming increasingly valuable, developing an established green field should only be considered where there is a compelling need and the location is demonstrably suitable. In our view, this application meets neither test.

We therefore strongly object to the proposed development on the following grounds:

- **Inappropriate development of the countryside:** The site is currently undeveloped countryside. A previous proposal to develop this land was rejected by the Planning Inspector in 2019, and the fundamental concerns about the suitability of the location remain. Granting permission would also set a concerning precedent for further encroachment into Wokingham's remaining green spaces.
- **Erosion of the green gap:** The development would weaken the important green gap between the Wokingham and Finchampstead settlement boundaries, contributing to the gradual urbanisation of an area that should remain open and undeveloped.
- **Unsuitable location and failure to meet planning policy:** A fundamental principle of planning is that a development must be appropriate for its proposed location. This site is not suitable for an intensive sports facility and the application appears to conflict with, or fail to satisfy, several relevant planning policies. The scale of the mitigation measures required is itself evidence of the harm the development would cause.
- **Serious impact on neighbouring residents:** The proposed 3.5-metre acoustic fence and 6-metre ball netting would be positioned only six metres from residents' boundaries. These structures would be visually overbearing and would leave neighbouring properties feeling hemmed in, while also causing loss of light and overshadowing.
- **Questionable noise mitigation:** We do not believe the acoustic fencing would adequately protect nearby homes. Noise will travel over the fence, particularly affecting upper-floor rooms and gardens. The need for such extensive acoustic screening demonstrates that this is not an appropriate location for the proposed level of sporting activity.

- **Unsafe and overcrowded layout:** The proposal attempts to accommodate too much sporting activity within a restricted area. The pitch layout does not appear to provide sufficient space to operate safely and gives inadequate consideration to neighbouring properties. There is a genuine risk of balls leaving the site, causing property damage and making residents feel unsafe when using their gardens.
- **Damage to the landscape and local ecology:** The development would fundamentally alter the natural character of land that has supported established wildlife for decades. Green space would be replaced by intensive sporting use, hard landscaping, fencing and ball netting, with a clear negative impact on the landscape.
- **Insufficient ecological assessment:** The information provided is not sufficient to properly assess the full impact on local flora and fauna. The development would inevitably disturb habitats and reduce the ecological value of the site.
- **Loss of trees and hedgerows:** The proposal includes the loss of protected trees and hedgerow, with further protected trees potentially at risk of root damage during construction of the acoustic fence. No adequate replacement-planting scheme has been specified.
- **Flooding and drainage concerns:** The site floods annually, yet the application does not provide sufficient assessment of drainage or flood risk. The development could make the pitches unusable at certain times and, more importantly, increase the risk of flooding to neighbouring properties.
- **Insufficient evidence of need:** The application has not adequately demonstrated a compelling need for this development in this location. The facilities appear primarily intended to serve the school, while their likely value and accessibility to the wider community have been overstated. Also given the site's location, the proposed facilities are unlikely to operate as a genuinely accessible community asset. The suggested benefit to external users appears to have been included primarily to strengthen the planning case rather than reflecting a clear and evidenced commitment to community use.

Taken together, these concerns demonstrate that the proposed development is unsuitable for this location and would cause lasting harm to the countryside, local wildlife and the amenity of neighbouring residents.

We respectfully request that Wokingham Borough Council reject this planning application and protect this green field from further urbanisation.