

PLANNING REF : 261175
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 9 Haygarth Gardens
: Finchampstead, Berkshire
: RG40 4RQ
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Matt Davies
DATE SUBMITTED : 07/07/2026

COMMENTS:

I wish to object to the above planning application.

Whilst I recognise the importance of improving sewer infrastructure and reducing the risk of sewer flooding, I am concerned that the current proposal would result in unnecessary and avoidable harm to Ha zebrouck Meadows SANG and that insufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the environmental impacts have been fully minimised.

1. Loss of Established Landscaping and Trees

The application acknowledges that approximately 250 young trees and whips planted as part of the recently approved SANG landscaping will be removed to facilitate the works. Although replacement planting is proposed, newly planted trees cannot simply be replaced without loss. The existing planting has already begun establishing habitat, visual screening and ecological value, and there is no guarantee that replacement planting will achieve the same success or maturity.

2. Impact on Hazebrouck Meadows SANG

Hazebrouck Meadows was specifically created to provide high-quality Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace. Construction activity lasting around five months, involving excavation, earthworks, machinery, welfare facilities and temporary compounds, will inevitably reduce the quality and enjoyment of this publicly accessible green space during that period.

The Council should carefully consider whether the proposal conflicts with policies intended to protect green infrastructure and ensure that SANG land continues to function effectively throughout construction.

3. Ventilation Column

The proposed 6-metre ventilation column is a significant permanent structure within an otherwise open landscape. The applicant argues that it will eventually become screened by tree planting, yet those trees are themselves being removed and replanted, meaning effective screening may take many years to establish. During that time the column will remain visually prominent.

The applicant states that alternative locations were considered but dismissed primarily because they would require additional engineering works. I am not convinced sufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that every reasonable alternative location has been fully explored to minimise visual impact.

4. Insufficient Detail Regarding Landscape Restoration

The supporting statement confirms that the detailed landscape restoration plan is still being drafted and will be discussed with the Council. This means the application is effectively seeking approval before the final restoration proposals are available for public scrutiny.

Given the importance of the SANG, a fully detailed and agreed restoration scheme should be available before planning permission is considered.

5. Long-Term Effects on the Character of the Site

Although the applicant describes the impacts as temporary, the development introduces permanent infrastructure including manhole covers, altered ground levels and a ventilation column. The proposal also permanently restricts future tree planting above the underground sewer due to required exclusion zones. This represents a lasting change to the layout and landscape character of this part of the SANG.

6. Construction Impacts

The application proposes approximately five months of construction involving excavation, storage of excavated material, plant, machinery and temporary working areas. Inevitably this will generate noise, dust, vehicle movements and disruption to users of the SANG. I request that, should the application be approved, stringent conditions are imposed controlling construction hours, access routes, dust suppression, noise management and restoration of the site.

Conclusion

I appreciate the need to improve sewer capacity and reduce the risk of sewer flooding. However, I do not believe the applicant has yet demonstrated that this proposal represents the least harmful option or that sufficient detail has been provided regarding landscape restoration and long-term protection of Hazebrouck Meadows SANG.

I therefore respectfully request that Wokingham Borough Council refuses the application