

PLANNING REF : 250543
PROPERTY ADDRESS : The Village
: Wokingham
: RG40 4JT
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Zain Ali
DATE SUBMITTED : 25/03/2025

COMMENTS:

Subject: Support for the Winnersh Mosque Proposal

Dear [Council/Planning Committee],

I am writing to express my strong support for the establishment of a mosque and community centre in Winnersh. As a long-term resident of Wokingham and a working professional, I have witnessed the steady growth of our diverse community and the increasing need for a dedicated place of worship for local Muslims. Repurposing an existing building for this purpose is a practical, community-oriented initiative that will not only serve the religious needs of the Muslim population but also foster inclusivity, cultural understanding, and social cohesion.

The Muslim community in Wokingham has grown significantly, from approximately 4,000 individuals in 2011 to over 8,600 today. Despite this, there remains a lack of adequate local facilities to accommodate religious and community activities. The proposed centre would address this gap, offering a space for prayer, educational programs, and community services. Many Muslims currently have to travel long distances to attend Friday prayers and other religious gatherings, contributing to congestion at existing mosques in Reading and beyond. A local facility would alleviate this burden while also reducing traffic pressures elsewhere.

Beyond religious purposes, the Muslim community is an integral part of Wokingham's social and economic fabric. We contribute significantly across sectors such as healthcare (NHS), education, technology, finance, and social services. A mosque is not just a place of worship but a hub for charitable initiatives, youth engagement, and interfaith dialogue. This project will enhance community integration, offering open doors to neighbours of all backgrounds and promoting mutual understanding through public events and educational programs.

I acknowledge that some residents have expressed concerns regarding traffic, noise, and the potential impact on the neighbourhood. However, the mosque's design and operational planning will ensure minimal disruption. Adequate parking arrangements, controlled prayer schedules, and community engagement initiatives will help address these concerns, making this centre a beneficial addition to Winnersh rather than a source of inconvenience.

The development of a mosque in Winnersh represents an opportunity to strengthen the town's reputation as an inclusive, forward-thinking community. It will serve as a bridge between different cultures and faiths, reinforcing shared values of respect, service, and community spirit. I sincerely urge the council to support this application in recognition of the practical need, the positive social impact, and the principles of fairness and equality.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope you will take into account the benefits this project will bring to our growing and diverse community.

Kind regards,
Zain Ali