

PLANNING REF : 260774
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 1 Maythorn Cottage
: Basingstoke Road, Riseley, Reading, Berks
: RG7 1QN
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Elaine Whittemore
DATE SUBMITTED : 14/05/2026

COMMENTS:

I live in Riseley, Berkshire and have for over 30 years and I write to object formally to the above planning application and to the cross boundary application to Hart District Council (260917) . I note that very little of the shown application actually falls within Hart District Council.

I believe that this application will have a significant impact on Riseley's character, countryside setting, traffic and local roads,wildlife, amenities and utilities.

I feel that this application is inappropriate in a countryside side setting with ancient woodland to one side and approach roads, Sun Lane & Bull Lane, both being single track lane currently used as footpaths and bridleways.

The proposal is outside the defined settlement boundary of Riseley and as far as I can see for planning purposes of both councils is defined as being in the countryside. The site is currently agricultural

/pastoral land rather than previously developed land .

In the applicant's statement he recognises conflict with the council development plan as he states that Riseley is a "Limited Development

Location" and the proposal does not meet various points of Wokingham's Core Strategy Policy.

In my opinion the scale of 44 dwellings with associated people and vehicles is not in any way a rounding-off of the village. It would be a significant development into countryside which is outside the settlement boundary and cause significant problems for the village as far as traffic, drainage, flooding, habitat destruction, light pollution, accessibility to doctors, dentist, schools etc.

Previous proposals for residential development on this site or in this part of Riseley, were previously rejected as unsuitable. Nothing of any consequence has changed since these previous decisions, as the land still remains outside the settlement boundary, within the countryside and dependent on the same limited village services . The narrow rural lanes are the same as are all the other issues such as ancient woodland and wildlife habitats. So i would assume that the same decision/conclusion should be reached this time. In addition a recent application for development on land to the east side of Dukes Field Cottage (231443) was also rejected by Hart District Council/Wokingham District Council for a variety of reasons (and is significant)as it included the loss of an important woodland buffer, fragmentation and isolation of green infrastructure, detrimental impact on landscape character, significant loss of TPO-protected trees and associated impact on wildlife habitats, and the site being

in an unsustainable location with a lack of services and amenities within walking distance. All of these rejection reasons apply to this development too and should support the conclusion that this development should be used.

The application site is part of the rural edge of Riseley. The planning statement describes the site as two pastoral fields divided by a mixed tree and hedgerow belt, enclosed by hedgerows, trees and informal field boundaries. The applicant itself accepts that development of the site with housing would "inevitably change" its landscape contribution by introducing built development on pastoral land which will exasperate other issues for existing residents. The widening of the junction of Sun

Lane with Basingstoke Road would erode some of the rural character of the village right near the entrance to the village and could cause damage to the roots of trees and hedges. This harm is not just localised as the village is defined not only by its existing housing but by its rural single track roads, paths, Roman roads such as the Devil's Highway but also by its trees, hedgerows and the wildlife that live in these areas of countryside and woodland and use it and the fields as a green corridor.

In the applicant's own documents it shows that Riseley has only a limited range of day-to-day facilities within walking distance. The planning statement identifies facilities in Riseley as a village hall with tea room and a pub, and notes that Swallowfield, contains including a small shop and a medical practice. Therefore villagers have to use a vehicle to access most services as the bus service is limited and only runs hourly, (not on Sundays) and only goes to Reading. There is no service to surrounding towns such as Basingstoke, Hook, Wokingham and therefore no access elsewhere for employment opportunities, schools, nurseries, leisure facilities etc. The proposal details the Doctors in Swallowfield and Lambs Lane School as 34 min and 44 minute walk respectively which makes this site unsuitable for development both for families and elderly people without access to a vehicle particularly as there are no cycleways or complete pavements to either premises.

The development proposes junction amendments to the existing Sun Lane / B3349 Basingstoke Road junction and the realignment of Sun Lane to provide a new access road with a footpath into the site. The existing Sun Lane would be tied into the new site access road by a new minor priority junction arrangement. I feel this is a major change to a narrow rural lane and the junction to the B3349 is at a sensitive edge of village location with a 60 mph speed limit in force and between listed cottages.

I feel that this development and the relevant vehicle access is not safe for either the vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders who currently have to use this narrow lane. Also the additional vehicles will worsen the queues at rush hour times with traffic trying to access the A33. We are already a rat run at peak times and what could amount to a minimum of 88 extra cars is unthinkable.

This application will have a significant impact on the outlook of properties on the Basingstoke Road and Yeosfield. I note that the current application is an outline application for access and 44

dwelling without any further detail. The planning statement states that layout, scale, appearance and landscaping will be determined later if outline permission is granted. But I feel those matters are central to the decision due to the effect on neighbouring residents, including overlooking, loss of green space, lighting, noise, loss of tranquillity and the day-to-day experience of living beside the site. The site is at a higher point of the village and therefore would be very visible to all and is therefore unsuitable for this reason as well as others previously mentioned.

The application site as previously mentioned is very near to a site of archaeological importance. The site lies immediately north of a Roman road connecting London to Silchester. There are possible archaeological remains within the site as a consequence. I note that the applicant will factor this in by a precautionary approach but given the scale of the development works, access road, drainage and services that will have to be put in, I think that this will not be possible.

The site lies within the 5 km buffer zone of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area and the development will apply pressure to their zone. As far as the biodiversity report, it identifies a likely net loss of 8.98 habitat units, equivalent to a 59.54% loss. It also states that this will be updated at reserved matters which seems a very uncertain basis to make a decision on.

Whilst I have no doubt there will be compensatory offers to sweeten the proposal but it does not change the fact that this piece of land is a green area of the countryside with significance to the village character, importance to residents for leisure facilities such as walking, riding and significant importance for wildlife habitats and trees. There is an area of ancient woodland to the north and an area of deciduous woodland to the south-west. As I understand it ancient woodland is to be protected.

The application site and its boundaries contain important tree and hedge features. The arboricultural report surveyed 33 trees, nine groups and two hedges. It identifies one Category A tree & seven trees and three groups of Category B value. It also records that trees T34 and T36 appear to be protected by Tree Preservation Orders. There is also mention of an oak (T29 category B tree) which root area would be severely impacted by the new highway and associated excavation work particularly as no dig construction techniques cannot not be used. So possible that this oak will not survive.

The drainage strategy depends on details to be fixed later. There is a current impact of run off/flooding on existing properties and this will be made worse by the dwellings proposed and hard landscaping. I note that various investigations are proposed which indicates that the applicant is aware that this is a problem and an unsuitable site for development.

So for all the reasons listed above I would ask that this application is refused by both councils.

