

PLANNING REF : 262274
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 44 Nantes Close
: London, London
: SW18 1JL
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Connor Allen-Lynam
DATE SUBMITTED : 06/10/2026

COMMENTS:
OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION 262274

Application Reference: 262274

Site Address: Former Microsoft Headquarters, Thames Valley Park,
Earley, Reading
Proposal: Demolition of three office buildings and construction of a
72MW data centre facility, on-site fuel cells, backup generators,
and substation.

Date: 06.10.2026

Dear Planning Officer,

I am writing to formally object to planning application 262274 for
the proposed data centre development at Thames Valley Park.

While I recognise the importance of digital infrastructure and the
role data centres play within the national economy, I believe this
proposal would result in significant adverse environmental,
ecological, visual, and amenity impacts. These impacts are not
adequately outweighed by the benefits of the development and
conflict with the objectives of local planning policy and the
Council's environmental commitments.

I respectfully request that Wokingham Borough Council refuses this
application for the following material planning reasons:

1. Environmental Impact and Carbon Emissions

The application documents indicate that the proposed facility would
require between 72MW and 110MW of electrical power when fully
operational. However, the local electricity network currently
provides only approximately 1.8MW of capacity to the site. As a
consequence, the applicant proposes to rely on on-site natural
gas-fed fuel cells for a substantial period until a full grid
connection becomes
available, which is anticipated to be around 2037.

This represents a prolonged dependence on fossil fuel-based energy
generation for a development that is promoted as critical digital
infrastructure. Given the scale of the proposed power demand and the
length of time before adequate grid capacity becomes available, I am
concerned that the environmental impacts associated with on-site gas
generation have not been sufficiently justified.

This approach is inconsistent with Wokingham Borough Council's
Climate Emergency commitments and aspirations to reduce carbon
emissions. The proposed reliance on fossil fuel-based energy
generation raises
significant concerns regarding greenhouse gas emissions and the

overall sustainability credentials of the development. I do not believe sufficient justification has been provided to demonstrate that these impacts are acceptable or adequately mitigated.

While the application's commitment to capturing and exporting waste heat to a local district heating network is welcomed, this positive measure does not in itself outweigh concerns regarding the development's reliance on natural gas-fuelled energy generation prior to the availability of the required grid connection, nor the wider environmental impacts associated with the scale and operation of the facility.

In addition, the application should demonstrate how operational carbon emissions associated with on-site power generation will be managed and reduced over the lifetime of the development, particularly where alternative low-carbon solutions may be available.

2. Residential Amenity: Noise and Air Quality

The proposed development includes substantial energy and mechanical infrastructure, including fuel cells, cooling equipment, and emergency backup generators operating within a large-scale industrial facility.

Given the scale of the proposed mechanical infrastructure, there is potential for noise and air quality impacts on nearby residential areas. Although mitigation measures may be proposed, the applicant should clearly demonstrate through robust and independently verified assessment that noise, vibration, and emissions can be maintained within acceptable limits at all times.

Particular consideration should be given to the cumulative impact of continuous cooling operations, periodic generator testing, maintenance activities, and any future increases in operational capacity. Local planning policies seek to protect residential amenity and quality of life, and it is essential that these impacts are fully understood before any permission is granted.

3. Impact on Biodiversity

The site is located immediately adjacent to the Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve and associated wetland habitats. The construction and operation of a substantial industrial facility on this scale has the potential to affect local biodiversity through increased artificial lighting, operational noise, waste heat output, and general disturbance.

Given the ecological sensitivity of the surrounding area, I am concerned that the proposal may undermine efforts to protect and enhance biodiversity. Increased lighting and activity has the potential to affect wildlife behaviour, habitat use, and ecological connectivity within and around Thames Valley Park.

The development should be assessed against requirements to protect ecological networks and deliver measurable Biodiversity Net Gain. The applicant should be required to clearly demonstrate that there will be no unacceptable impacts on protected species, habitats, or

wider ecological corridors, and that any biodiversity enhancements fully compensate for any harm caused.

4. Visual Impact and Scale of Development

The proposed buildings would reach a maximum height of approximately 30.5 metres and would introduce a substantial volume of development onto the site.

The scale, bulk, and massing of the proposed buildings would represent a significant change from the current office-led character of the site and may adversely affect the visual appearance of the riverside business park environment. The development may result in noticeable visual impacts when viewed from surrounding public areas, nearby footpaths, and sections of the River Thames corridor.

I do not believe the proposal adequately demonstrates that the visual impact of the development has been minimised, particularly given its prominence and proximity to open spaces and recreational areas.

5. Construction Traffic and Disturbance

The demolition of three existing office buildings and the construction of a major data centre complex would inevitably require significant construction activity over an extended period.

This is likely to generate substantial construction vehicle movements, increased traffic, noise, dust, and general disruption for nearby residents, businesses, and users of Thames Valley Park. Consideration should be given to whether the local highway network and surrounding area can accommodate these impacts without unacceptable adverse effects.

The Council should be satisfied that robust construction management measures are in place to minimise disruption throughout the demolition and construction phases.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, I believe the proposal would result in unacceptable environmental, ecological, visual, and amenity impacts that have not been adequately justified or mitigated. I therefore respectfully request that Wokingham Borough Council refuses planning application 262274.

Should the Council be minded to approve the proposal, I ask that these concerns are fully examined and addressed through robust planning conditions, independent technical assessment, and enforceable mitigation measures to ensure that local residents, wildlife, and the surrounding environment are adequately protected.

Yours faithfully,

