

PLANNING REF : 262274
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 10 Shepherds Avenue
: Reading, England
: RG6 1AY
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Shubhendu Prasanta Das
DATE SUBMITTED : 10/10/2026

COMMENTS:

FORMAL OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION 262274
PROPOSED THAMES VALLEY PARK DATA CENTRE, READING

To: Development Management, Wokingham Borough Council

Application reference: 262274

Site: Thames Valley Park, Reading

I OBJECT TO THIS PLANNING APPLICATION AND REQUEST THAT PLANNING
PERMISSION BE REFUSED.

1. INTRODUCTION AND MY POSITION AS AN IMMEDIATELY AFFECTED PROPERTY
OWNER

I am the owner of a residential property immediately adjoining the
proposed development site. My property and the development site are
separated by a railway line that runs between the two areas. I also
own protected woodland on my side of the railway, which forms an
important part of my daily life and the environment in which I live.

My objection is based on the potential effects of this development
on my home, the protected woodland and the surrounding environment.
I am particularly concerned about the introduction of a large-scale
data centre incorporating substantial on-site electricity
generation,
cooling equipment, backup generators and associated infrastructure
in such close proximity to my property and woodland.

I recognise that the railway line provides a physical separation
between the development and my woodland. However, that separation
does not, by itself, establish that the woodland will be protected
from the potential effects of operational noise, artificial
lighting, air emissions, waste heat and disturbance to wildlife.

My concern is not that the developer will necessarily remove trees
directly from my land. It is that a development of this scale and
nature could materially affect the environmental quality,
tranquillity and ecological character of the protected woodland that
I own and experience as part of my everyday life.

As one of the closest residential property owners, I ask the Council
to consider the actual relationship between my property, the railway
corridor, the woodland and the proposed infrastructure, rather than
relying solely on general assessments of effects across the wider
business park.

The planning application must be assessed on its merits, with proper
regard to the development plan, applicable national planning policy
and the evidence submitted by the applicant.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT IS MORE THAN A DATA CENTRE

The proposal is not simply a conventional commercial building. It includes a large data centre, on-site electricity generation using natural gas, fuel cells, backup generators, cooling equipment, substations and associated mechanical and electrical infrastructure.

The applicant's Energy Strategy identifies an estimated peak electrical demand of approximately 110 MW at full build-out, including 72 MW of IT load. It also refers to an initial grid supply of 1.8 MW for the administration building and a potential future increase in grid capacity.

These details are important because the environmental consequences of the development will depend on the operation of the entire facility, including its power-generation and cooling infrastructure.

The Council should establish the anticipated number, capacity, locations and operating profiles of the fuel cells, generators and cooling equipment. It should also assess how these systems could operate together, including during periods of high demand, maintenance, testing and emergency operation.

The assessment must consider the combined effects of the development rather than treating each source of noise, emissions or heat in isolation.

I am concerned that the proximity of this infrastructure to my home and protected woodland could result in environmental effects that are not adequately reflected by a general assessment of the data centre building alone.

3. PROTECTED WOODLAND AND ITS ENVIRONMENTAL VALUE

The protected woodland that I own is a central consideration in my objection. It is part of my everyday environment and has value beyond the individual trees within it. Its mature vegetation, wildlife, natural character and relative tranquillity are important features that should be considered when assessing the effects of this development.

The woodland is separated from the proposed development site by a railway line. I am not suggesting that the applicant will necessarily undertake construction within my woodland or directly remove trees on my land. My concern is the potential for the development's operational and environmental effects to extend across the railway corridor.

The Council should establish whether the applicant's environmental assessments adequately consider the location of my woodland and the potential for indirect effects arising from:

- Noise, including low-frequency and tonal noise from cooling equipment, fuel cells and generators.
- Artificial lighting and glare affecting the woodland's natural darkness.
- Air emissions and the potential effects of pollutants on vegetation and habitats.

- Waste heat and associated changes to the local environment. - Construction dust, vibration and disturbance.
- Effects on bats, birds and other wildlife using the woodland and surrounding habitats.
- Any relevant changes to drainage, soil conditions or the wider environment.

These potential effects should be assessed on the available evidence. Neither the presence of the railway line nor the general location of the development within a business park should be treated as proof that the woodland will be unaffected.

I ask the Council to ensure that the environmental assessments specifically address the woodland's position relative to the proposed development and identify any additional mitigation required to protect it.

4. TREE REMOVAL AND THE ARBORICULTURAL ASSESSMENT

The applicant's Arboricultural Development Statement identifies 131 individual trees in its survey, of which 75 are proposed for removal.

I recognise that these figures relate to the trees surveyed by the applicant and do not, by themselves, establish that trees within my woodland will be removed. Nevertheless, the proposed loss of this number of trees warrants careful scrutiny of the development's layout, landscaping and wider environmental effects.

The Council should establish which trees are to be removed, their condition and status, the justification for their removal and whether reasonable alternatives have been considered.

It should also assess the relationship between tree removal, retained vegetation, proposed replacement planting, habitat connectivity and the wider landscape.

Replacement planting cannot immediately reproduce the benefits of mature trees. The loss of established trees and the time required for new planting to develop equivalent canopy, screening and habitat value should be taken into account.

I have previously identified Woodland Tree Preservation Order No. 777/1996, reference W1, in connection with the woodland of concern. I request that the Council verify the precise designation and boundary against its definitive records and establish the relationship between the protected woodland, the railway corridor and the proposed development.

The Council should consider the arboricultural evidence alongside the ecological, lighting, drainage, noise and air-quality assessments. Retaining trees physically does not necessarily establish that their surrounding environment will remain suitable for their long-term health and ecological function.

5. NOISE AND THE EFFECT ON MY HOME AND WOODLAND

I am particularly concerned about the potential for operational noise from cooling equipment, fuel cells, backup generators, transformers and other mechanical plant.

These systems may operate for extended periods, including overnight. Their effects could include continuous background noise, low-frequency sound, tonal noise and intermittent increases in noise during generator testing or other operational activities.

My home is immediately adjacent to the development site, and my protected woodland is located nearby on the opposite side of the railway. The Council should therefore consider both residential amenity and the potential for noise disturbance to wildlife and the natural character of the woodland.

The applicant's Environmental Statement acknowledges that final plant specifications and locations are not yet available and that operational noise limits are intended to inform detailed design.

This raises an important question: has the applicant demonstrated that the development can operate acceptably at this location, or is that conclusion dependent on plant details and mitigation that have yet to be finalised?

I request that the Council establish whether the noise assessment adequately addresses:

- Daytime, evening and night-time noise at my property.
- The effects of low-frequency, tonal and intermittent noise.
- Simultaneous operation of cooling equipment, fuel cells and generators.
- Generator testing and other foreseeable operating scenarios.
- The cumulative effect of all relevant plant.
- Noise effects on the nearby woodland and wildlife.

- The effectiveness of proposed acoustic enclosures and other mitigation.

Any operational noise limits and mitigation measures should be technically justified, measurable and enforceable.

If the applicant cannot demonstrate that acceptable noise levels can be achieved within the parameters of the outline application, the Council should not assume that the issue can necessarily be resolved at a later stage.

6. ON-SITE GAS-FIRED POWER GENERATION AND AIR QUALITY

The proposed development includes natural-gas fuel cells and backup electricity-generation infrastructure. The environmental consequences of this infrastructure must be considered as an integral part of the application.

The Council should scrutinise the applicant's air-quality assessment and establish whether it adequately considers emissions from fuel cells, backup generators and other relevant sources under realistic operating conditions.

Relevant pollutants include nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, particulate matter and other emissions associated with the proposed equipment.

The assessment should address the combined effects of multiple units operating simultaneously, the likely frequency and duration of generator testing, relevant emission-control systems and the potential effects at the closest residential and ecological receptors.

I ask that the Council's Environmental Health specialists review whether the modelling assumptions and proposed mitigation are appropriate for this particular site.

The assessment should specifically consider my property and the location of my protected woodland. It should not rely solely on general conclusions for the wider area or assume that the railway corridor removes the need to consider potential effects on the woodland.

Where the acceptability of the development depends on emission controls or operating restrictions, these should be supported by evidence and secured through appropriate, enforceable conditions.

7. WASTE HEAT AND COOLING INFRASTRUCTURE

A development of this scale will require substantial cooling infrastructure and will generate heat through its data-processing operations and associated energy systems.

The applicant's energy documentation discusses the potential for waste-heat recovery. However, a potential opportunity for heat reuse is not equivalent to a committed and deliverable scheme.

The Council should establish whether the environmental assessment adequately considers the anticipated heat output, cooling arrangements and discharge locations, together with any relevant effects on neighbouring properties and woodland.

The applicant should explain whether waste-heat recovery is technically and commercially feasible, what infrastructure would be required, and whether there is a realistic mechanism to secure its delivery.

Any benefits from a future heat-reuse scheme should not be assumed unless they are supported by evidence and can reasonably be expected to materialise.

The Council should also establish whether the combined effects of cooling equipment and power-generation infrastructure have been adequately assessed. The potential effects on the surrounding environment should be considered alongside noise, emissions, lighting and other operational impacts.

8. ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING AND WILDLIFE DISTURBANCE

The application includes an Exterior Lighting Strategy. Its effectiveness depends on the actual fittings, optics, mounting

arrangements, shielding and control settings used.

Given the proximity of my protected woodland, the Council should establish whether the proposed lighting would cause unacceptable light spill, glare or disturbance to the woodland environment and wildlife.

The assessment should consider security lighting, building-mounted lights, access roads, parking areas, plant areas and any lighting required for maintenance and operational safety.

The submitted bat survey and ecological material should be considered alongside the lighting strategy, with particular attention to bats and other nocturnal wildlife that may use the woodland and surrounding habitats.

The railway corridor should not be assumed to eliminate the possibility of light spill or ecological disturbance.

Any permission should secure an appropriate lighting design and effective controls through enforceable conditions. The applicant should not be able to make later changes that materially undermine the assessed mitigation.

9. ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY

The application's ecological effects must be considered beyond the physical footprint of the buildings.

The submitted ecological material includes a Bat Survey Report and other assessments relating to habitats and wildlife. The Council should establish whether these assessments adequately consider the potential effects of the proposed development on the nearby woodland and the wider ecological network.

Particular consideration should be given to bat commuting and foraging routes, habitat connectivity, woodland edges, artificial lighting, operational noise and construction disturbance.

The proposed tree removal and landscaping should also be assessed in the context of the existing habitats and the time required for any replacement planting to provide meaningful ecological benefits.

A biodiversity calculation or a commitment to provide replacement habitat does not automatically demonstrate that existing mature woodland and established ecological features will be adequately protected.

The Council should ensure that the development complies with applicable biodiversity requirements and that any necessary mitigation, compensation and long-term management measures are deliverable and enforceable.

10. DRAINAGE AND THE WIDER ENVIRONMENT

The application includes a Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy. These should be considered alongside the arboricultural and ecological evidence.

The Council should establish whether the proposed construction and operational arrangements could cause relevant changes to drainage, surface-water movement or soil conditions affecting retained trees and nearby habitats.

Although my woodland is separated from the development site by a railway line, its location and environmental relationship to the site should be considered when assessing any potential indirect effects.

The applicant should demonstrate that the drainage strategy adequately addresses the site's proposed infrastructure, construction arrangements and long-term operation.

If the submitted evidence does not establish that relevant environmental effects can be managed acceptably, further information should be obtained before the application is determined.

11. CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENERGY STRATEGY

The proposed development's substantial electricity demand and reliance on on-site gas-fired generation raise important questions about its operational greenhouse-gas emissions and long-term energy strategy.

The Council should examine the assumptions about future grid capacity, the anticipated duration of gas-fired generation and the extent to which the proposal depends on future infrastructure that is not yet available.

The applicant should distinguish between measures that are committed and deliverable and those that represent potential future opportunities.

The assessment should address operational emissions and relevant embodied carbon, taking account of the proposed energy strategy over the expected life of the development.

The Council should not assume that future improvements in electricity supply or potential waste-heat recovery will necessarily occur without adequate supporting evidence.

The development should be assessed against applicable planning policies and national climate objectives on the basis of a realistic and properly evidenced operational scenario.

12. CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

Construction and demolition could cause noise, dust, vibration, vehicle movements, lighting and disturbance over an extended period.

The Council should require a sufficiently detailed and enforceable Construction Environmental Management Plan addressing construction hours, noise, dust suppression, vibration, vehicle movements, pollution prevention, temporary lighting, drainage and protection of retained trees and habitats.

The plan should consider the proximity of my home and protected woodland and identify the specific measures required to unacceptable disturbance.

It should also establish how compliance will be monitored, how complaints will be investigated and what corrective action will be required if the agreed measures prove ineffective.

13. OUTLINE PERMISSION AND UNRESOLVED TECHNICAL DETAILS

This is an outline planning application with all matters reserved except for access.

The Council must nevertheless be satisfied that the development is acceptable in principle and that the parameters being approved can be implemented without unacceptable environmental or residential effects.

Where final plant specifications and locations have not yet been established, the Council should determine whether the submitted assessments adequately cover the reasonable range of development that could be delivered under the proposed parameters.

Conditions can be appropriate for securing later details, but they should not be used to defer fundamental questions about whether the development can operate acceptably at this location.

If the required mitigation could materially affect the layout, scale or operation of the development, the Council should establish its feasibility before granting permission.

Any additional environmental information required to demonstrate the acceptability of the proposal should be obtained before determination and made available for appropriate public scrutiny.

14. PLANNING POLICY AND THE NEED FOR INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY

I recognise that data centres can form part of the UK's digital infrastructure. However, their potential economic benefits do not remove the need to assess the environmental and residential consequences of an individual proposal.

The Council must determine this application in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking account of the applicable National Planning Policy Framework and relevant planning guidance.

The proposal should be assessed against the applicable policies concerning residential amenity, pollution, trees and woodland, biodiversity, landscape, sustainable development and climate change.

The central question is whether this particular development, including its on-site electricity generation and associated infrastructure, has demonstrated that its effects can be made acceptable at this cation.

The existence of numerous technical reports should not be treated as proof that every relevant concern has been resolved. The Council must examine the assumptions, limitations and conclusions of those reports and establish whether the proposed mitigation is effective and enforceable.

I request that the decision expressly addresses the potential effects on my home and protected woodland, taking account of the railway corridor, the scale of the development and the cumulative effects of its operational infrastructure.

15. FORMAL REQUEST TO THE COUNCIL

For the reasons set out above, I request that Wokingham Borough Council:

1. Refuse planning permission if it cannot be satisfied that the development would avoid unacceptable effects on residential amenity, protected woodland, biodiversity and the wider environment.
2. Verify the precise designation and boundary of my protected woodland, including the previously identified Woodland Tree Preservation Order No. 777/1996, reference W1, and establish its relationship to the development site and intervening railway corridor.
3. Ensure that the environmental assessments specifically consider the potential effects of the development on my woodland, including operational noise, artificial lighting, air emissions, heat and wildlife disturbance.
4. Scrutinise the proposed removal of 75 out of 131 surveyed individual trees, including the justification for removal and the adequacy of the proposed retention, landscaping and replacement planting.
5. Ensure that noise assessments explicitly consider the closest residential receptors and adequately assess the cumulative effects of cooling equipment, fuel cells, backup generators and other relevant plant.
6. Require the applicant to demonstrate that the air-quality assessment adequately addresses emissions from the proposed power-generation infrastructure under realistic operating scenarios.
7. Examine the assumptions underlying the energy strategy, including future grid capacity, the anticipated operation of gas-fired generation and the deliverability of any proposed waste-heat recovery scheme.
8. Ensure that the ecological and lighting assessments adequately consider the nearby woodland and that any required mitigation is secured through enforceable conditions.
9. Require any additional technical information necessary to

establish the acceptability of the development before determination, rather than deferring fundamental questions to later approval stages.

10. If permission is granted, impose clear and enforceable conditions covering operational noise, emissions, lighting, construction management, drainage, tree protection, ecological mitigation and monitoring.

11. Ensure that any material amendments or additional environmental information are made available for appropriate public scrutiny before the planning decision is reached.

CONCLUSION

I am the owner of a residential property immediately adjoining the proposed development site and of protected woodland separated from the site by a railway line.

My objection is based on the potential effect of this development on my home and the protected woodland that forms part of my daily life. The woodland is not simply a collection of trees. Its natural character, tranquillity, wildlife and ecological value are important features of the environment in which I live.

I recognise that the railway line provides physical separation between the woodland and the development site. However, the existence of that separation does not establish that the proposed datacentre and its associated power-generation, cooling and mechanical infrastructure will have no material environmental effects beyond the site boundary.

The applicant's own documentation identifies a substantial development with significant energy requirements and extensive associated infrastructure. The application also proposes the removal of 75 out of 131 surveyed individual trees, while important operational plant details remain to be finalised.

The Council must establish whether the combined effects of this development have been adequately assessed and whether the proposed mitigation will be effective, deliverable and enforceable.

I respectfully request that the Council give proper weight to the proximity of my home and protected woodland, the specific environmental sensitivities of the location and the limitations of any assessments that depend on unresolved details.

Unless the Council can demonstrate, on the basis of adequate evidence, that the development would avoid unacceptable effects on residential amenity, protected woodland and the wider environment, I request that planning permission be refused.

Please register this representation as a formal objection to planning application 262274 and take the matters raised into account when determining the application.