

PLANNING REF : 260774
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Pound House
: Basingstoke Road, Riseley, Berkshire
: RG7 1QL
SUBMITTED BY : Miss Jessica Hughes
DATE SUBMITTED : 11/05/2026

COMMENTS:

I am writing to formally and strongly 100% oppose this proposed development.

This is a cross boundary proposal submitted to Wokingham Borough Council with the access and highway works located largely within Hart District. I am objecting therefore on both counts - for the development as a whole and the access needed for such a development. I oppose on the following grounds -

1. Inappropriate development in an unsuitable location

This site comprises of agricultural fields and pastoral land. This proposal extends built development into unsuitable open countryside on the south western edge of the village.

Previous proposals for residential development on this site have previously been rejected as unsuitable and nothing has changed since those earlier decisions, if anything given the recent unsuitable development nearby the reasons for rejecting this proposal are even stronger. This land remains outside the settlement boundary and is within the countryside. In the recent adjoining local authority consultation (in response to Hart District Councils application concerning the land at Dukes Meadow) Wokingham Borough Council objected to residential development in Riseley on the grounds it had a detrimental impact on landscape character, significant loss of TPO protected trees, the loss of an important woodland buffer and the associated impact on wildlife habitats. All the same objections apply to these nearby fields.

The applicants own planning statement even recognizes this conflict with the development plan. It accepts its proposal does not pass criteria in points 1-7 of Core Strategy Policy CP11. It states the development of the site with housing would 'inevitably change' its landscape.

2. Heritage Harm

As a nation with some of the oldest housing stock in Europe we owe it to present and future generations to be custodians of these properties and their surroundings. Riseley has 3 Grade II listed properties very close to this development. Coldharbour Cottage on Sun Lane, Pound House on Basingstoke Road and Bull Lane Cottage on Bull Lane. There is a threat to our built heritage as these such proposed developments would harm the existing local properties. Under National Planning Policy great weight must be given to the conservation of a heritage asset, regardless of whether the harm is considered substantial or less than substantial. Grade II listings signifies the buildings are an irreplaceable resource. Designated heritage assets including listed buildings are as stated in the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update as 'irreplaceable resources' that should be conserved for the benefits of future generations' The Listed building and conservation areas act 1990- section 66 places a duty on councils to have 'special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting.' The proposed development creates an urbanising effect on the rural setting. The bulk and density of the proposed new houses are incompatible with the low profile historic nature of Grade II buildings.

There is significance to the setting the listed buildings are in. The destruction of the historic landscape causes harmful change to the settings the listed buildings are in as a modern estate directly and significantly changes the character. There would be an impact on visual character as the development would introduce a prominent built form visible from the listed cottages. There would be harmful change to the settings of the listed buildings as the proposed development of agricultural fields destroys the historic context as rural dwellings.

The change from quiet fields to a residential estate with increasing noise and traffic alters the tranquil setting which is part of the listed buildings characters.

44 homes is a clear over development. The uncertainty created by the nature of this application provides strong reason to refuse permission.

3.Flooding and Environmental harm

I am seriously concerned about the increase risk of flooding this development would pose to neighbouring and downstream properties. The planning statement acknowledges areas on Sun and Bull Lane are susceptible to flooding. There is a flooding risk to properties along the Basingstoke road in particular due to gardens being lower than the proposed development site. The development would increase the amount of hard surfaces thereby reducing the natural drainage of the fields and increasing surface water run off. The existing water supply and sewage systems in and around Riseley are already under significant strain. Wokingham Borough Council is already aware of the failing of the drainage network in Swallowfield and Riseley with already this year disruption with tankers required to take away sewage.

4.Harm to local ecology, wildlife and ancient woodland

The ancient woodland located to the north of the site represents an important ecological constraint being a habitat connectivity for bats, birds and small mammals. The protection of this ancient woodland and the need for a buffer was one of the original reasons for rejecting the proposal on the piece of land previously and this has not changed and remains a key factor. The Arboricultural report states this ancient woodland is an irreplaceable habitat. The proposed site is of 2 agricultural/pastoral fields with hedgerow boundaries and a central belt of trees and vegetation. The applicants own biodiversity figures are of great concern with its own

acknowledgement of the negative impact on habitat units, hedgerows and grassland. These fields, hedgerows, trees are a green corridor at the edge of Riseley and offer foraging and sheltering opportunities to wildlife. The applicants own Tree survey acknowledges 'the works will still give rise to a moderate adverse arboricultural impact, as they introduce new excavation within root protection areas that cannot be avoided or fully mitigated' This application raises the same type of harm Wokingham Borough Council expressly objected to as part of the afore mentioned recent development.

It is not acceptable to treat these pieces of land as disposable simply because a piece of land is offset elsewhere, once this habitat is lost there is no going back. These factors should weigh heavily against development on this site.

5. Harm to Sun Lane and Road Safety

The new access and widening of the junction at Sun Lane with Basingstoke Road would erode the rural character at this end of the village and the applicants own proposal admits this.

This is a significant intervention into what is a narrow rural lane at an already congested and sensitive village end junction. The transport statement predicts the equivalent of 1 vehicle every 2-3 minutes on average during am and pm peak hours. The Basingstoke Road is already used inappropriately as a short cut by people outside the village seeking to jump the continual queue to the roundabout the join the Swallowfield bypass and M4. The increased traffic caused by this vast increase in the number of cars is only going to make this situation worse. Sun and Bull Lane are narrow rural lanes used by cyclists, pedestrians, equestrians and dog walkers. Their safety depends heavily on the character and low vehicle numbers which would materially be changed by the creation of this new access. Inevitably it will also increase the traffic at the Bull Lane junction at which it is already very difficult to cross at Basingstoke road onto to Odiham Road due to traffic and poor visibility.

6. Archaeological interest

There was a survey conducted over 2 seasons of fieldwork during 1990/91 funded by Berkshire Archaeological Trust and Berkshire County Council as during the construction of the Swallowfield bypass 2 areas of roman finds were discovered.

At Coldharbour wood (next to Coldharbour Cottage on Sun Lane) Romano-British and prehistoric activity is recorded within the study area. The Historic Environment assessment acknowledges there is overall a 'moderate archeological potential within the site based on its proximity to an important roman road and its location between a possible Romano-British roadside settlement site to the west and a known iron age settlement to the south east'

It is therefore clear that given its location this site could be of further archaeological interest

7. Local facilities and reliance on cars

In the recent Dukes meadow development Wokingham Borough Council objected to the proposal - reasons including the site being an unsuitable location with a lack of services and amenities within walking distance. These concerns are consistent and identical to this proposed development. The applicants Travel Plan statement confirms the limited nature of local facilities. The nearest Swallowfield Post Office and Medical Practice are not in a reasonable distance to consider walking so there is a heavy reliance on a private car for these and other amenities. Public transport provision cannot be sited as a suitable alternative with the infrequency the bus service offers. I feel this conflict is very important with the already over subscribed local medical practice and schools.

8. Pollution and Traffic

Additional traffic would increase the pollution in the area both from noise, air and light thus adversely affecting the Riseley residents, the local environment and the tranquility of what is left of the rural setting. Riseley has already been subjected to local development

including the development recently of 82 properties on the edge of the village very close to this proposed development by the same land

owner. Riseley residents feel the village has become a scapegoat for development being on the boundary between 2 counties and this is not acceptable.

I strongly urge the council to please take into account the objections of Riseley residents and to refuse this application.