

PLANNING REF : 260720
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 1 Shute End
: Wokingham
: RG40 11BH
SUBMITTED BY : Councillor Marc Brunel-Walker
DATE SUBMITTED : 12/05/2026

COMMENTS:

Date: May 12, 2026

RE: Planning Application 260720 - Residential development of 136 dwellings (Permission in Principle).

As the Ward Councillor for Wokingham Without, I am writing to formally OBJECT to this application on behalf of the residents of the ward.

While the site has previously been subject to a limited permission for the conversion of an existing office building, this proposal for 136 dwellings is a significant and unjustified intensification of use. It represents a major residential encroachment into the countryside that is neither allocated in our spatial strategy nor required to meet our housing targets.

My objections, reflecting the collective concerns of the Wokingham Without community, are as follows:

1. Conflict with the Plan-Led System and Settlement Boundaries

This site is not allocated for housing in the current Development Plan, nor is it included in the emerging Local Plan Update (2023-2040) currently at the Independent Examination phase.

- Strategic Exclusion: The Council has already determined through its rigorous vetting process that this land is not suitable for sustainable growth. Approving a major development here would bypass the democratic plan-making process and undermine the strategy currently being assessed by the Planning Inspector.

- Settlement Boundaries: The site lies outside the defined settlement boundary (Core Strategy Policy CP9). This proposal constitutes a speculative expansion into the rural "buffer" that protects the distinct character of Wokingham Without.

2. Consistency with Recent Planning Precedents

Both Wokingham Borough Council and the Planning Inspectorate have recently and robustly refused similar unsustainable developments in this immediate vicinity:

- Heathlands Road: Large-scale applications in this area have been refused and subsequently dismissed at appeal. The Inspectorate upheld that such developments cause unacceptable harm to the rural character and lack sustainable transport links.

o Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/25/3359928 - Land at Heathlands Road, Wokingham RG40 3AR

- Nine Mile Ride (near the Cricket Club): Smaller applications in this sensitive location were refused because they represented inappropriate encroachment into the countryside and lacked safe access.

- Comparison: This application (260720) suffers from the exact same fatal flaws. To approve this would be a complete reversal of the sound planning logic and "line in the sand" already established by the Inspectorate for Wokingham Without.

3. Infrastructure Deficit and Highway Safety

Residents are rightly concerned about the cumulative impact on our overstretched local services:

- Sustainability: The site is in an unsustainable location with poor access to regular public transport. Contrary to Policy CP1 and CP6, this development would force 136 households into near-total car dependency for schools, GPs, and shopping.

- Highways: The addition of hundreds of daily vehicle movements will place unacceptable pressure on the local road network. The Inspectorate has already noted the constrained nature of these rural roads in previous appeals in the ward.

4. Environmental Impact

The scale of 136 dwellings far exceeds the footprint of the previous office use. This development would lead to a significant loss of biodiversity, the destruction of established wildlife corridors, and increased surface water run-off risks (MDD Policy CC09).

Conclusion

This application is a clear case of "speculative development." It seeks to exploit a limited conversion permission to force a major housing estate onto land that has been deliberately excluded from the Borough's strategic housing vision.

On behalf of the residents of Wokingham Without, I urge the Planning Department to remain consistent with previous appeal decisions in this area and REFUSE this application. I also request that this application be listed for determination by the Planning Committee.