

PLANNING REF : 250543
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Arbor Lane
: Wokingham, Berkshire
: RG41 5JD
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Kuldip Johal
DATE SUBMITTED : 21/03/2025

COMMENTS:

I hereby submit my strong formal objection to the proposed Islamic Community Centre application, citing several critical material planning considerations that warrant serious examination:

Traffic Safety and Infrastructure

The proposed center's location and access to and from Reading Road poses significant traffic safety hazards due to:

- o Existing severe congestion patterns that in turn create issues on the Showcase roundabout.
- o Insufficient infrastructure to accommodate increased vehicle movements.
- o Particularly concerning conditions during Friday afternoon prayer times, for which I feel the information from the Transport Scoping Note is misleading given my experience of traffic problems near other such centers - especially during Friday prayers.
- o Potential for dangerous queuing and merging maneuvers.

Parking Provision Deficiencies

The allocated parking spaces are demonstrably insufficient for projected usage, leading to:

- o Unavoidable overflow parking in adjacent commercial lots.
- o Increased risk of illegal parking practices.
- o Predictable conflicts with neighboring businesses (Halfords, Wickes).
- o People will not walk to this center, despite this being outline by some supporting this application during inclement weather conditions or rush to get to prayers on time.
- o Reduced safety for pedestrians and vehicles.

The council need to take into account data from the National Travel Survey that highlighted that the average number of persons in a car during a short trip is 1.5 people.

Impact on Local Commerce

The development threatens Winnersh's business ecosystem in the vicinity through:

- o Disruption of existing customer access patterns.
- o Loss of parking spaces essential for commercial operations.
- o Negative impact on local employment opportunities.
- o Potential closure of affected enterprises which serve the local community.
- o Potential for conflict.

Interfaith Relations Considerations

The close proximity to the Sikh Centre raises legitimate concerns

regarding:

- o Historical precedents from similar situations in other areas in the UK, which have resulted in religious conflict.
- o Potential strain on community relations.
- o Risk of interfaith tensions.
- o Impact on Winnersh's established harmonious environment.

Community Integration Claims

The application's assertion regarding multi-faith community usage requires scrutiny as I feel there is misleading representations in the application due to:

- o Lack of verifiable precedent from similar facilities from other sites in the area, which have shown that they only cater for the Muslim community.
- o Unrealistic expectations regarding shared facility management.

I formally request that Wokingham Council takes full responsibility for addressing these material planning considerations. Should approval proceed despite these documented concerns, the council must acknowledge its role in any subsequent issues affecting Winnersh residents and businesses and problems that in my mind will most definitely occur.

Ultimately when assessing this application, it needs to be done based upon assessing the suitability of the location based upon the intended use and not be concerned about rejection based upon the fear of being seen as racially discriminatory.