

PLANNING REF : 261597
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 43 Commons Road
: Wokingham
: RG41 1JJ
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Gaurav Tandon
DATE SUBMITTED : 03/08/2026

COMMENTS:

I object strongly to this application, on the following grounds:

Loss of mature and protected trees

The site contains numerous Tree Preservation Order (TPO) trees and veteran trees dividing the site's eastern and western extents, along with buffer hedgerows and trees along the southern and western boundaries. Veteran trees are irreplaceable habitats that take centuries to mature, and their loss (or root/canopy damage during construction of 53 dwellings, access roads and services) would cause permanent, irreversible harm to local biodiversity and landscape character that no amount of replacement planting can mitigate. Single point of access with no credible alternative
The proposed access for all vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians relies solely on an existing narrow track linking a field gate to Old Forest Road, a track that already serves two neighbouring properties (Oaklea Cottage and The Stables). No credible alternative access or secondary route has been demonstrated, raising serious concerns about capacity, emergency vehicle access, and safety once this track must additionally serve a 53-dwelling estate.

CIL avoidance disguised as housing choice

The proposed "Option B" reclassifies all 53 dwellings as "Affordable Housing" to qualify for Social Housing Relief from the Community Infrastructure Levy, even though 32 of those units remain effectively open-market dwellings, merely brought within a Registered Provider's rules on paper. This risks depriving the Council of significant CIL income that would otherwise fund essential infrastructure, without any genuine increase in affordable housing delivered.

Weakening of safeguards for genuinely affordable housing

The variation removes the existing "Nominations Agreement" and replaces it with a diluted version that strips out all local connection criteria for shared ownership housing, undermining local residents' ability to access these homes. New clauses also exempt mortgagees and receivers from affordable housing obligations, allowing units to be disposed of free of these restrictions in the event of default, with no requirement to re-provide affordable housing elsewhere.

Lack of transparency and public benefit

No credible planning or ecological justification has been presented for combining tree loss, an inadequate single access point, and a financially motivated restructuring of the housing mix; the primary beneficiaries appear to be the developer's tax and finance position rather than the local community or environment.

For these reasons, I ask the Council to refuse the underlying planning permission and the associated Deed of Variation, or at minimum

require an independent arboricultural impact assessment, a full options appraisal of alternative access routes, and independent scrutiny of the CIL and affordable housing implications before any further approval is granted.