

PLANNING REF : 261597
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 41 Lowther Road
: Wokingham
: RG41 1JB
SUBMITTED BY : Mr David Ogden
DATE SUBMITTED : 10/08/2026

COMMENTS:

OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATIONS 261597 AND 261298
Land at Old Forest Road, Winnersh, Wokingham

I wish to strongly object to the above planning applications solely in relation to the proposed access arrangements and the resulting highway, congestion and road-safety implications.

For the avoidance of doubt, I am not objecting to the principle of residential development on this site or to the construction of the proposed houses themselves. My objection is specifically to the proposal to route the traffic generated by the development onto Old Forest Road and through the surrounding residential road network.

1. Inappropriate choice of access

Old Forest Road is already subject to significant traffic and congestion. Introducing the additional traffic generated by this development onto an existing residential road is, in my view, an inappropriate solution when there appears to be a substantially more suitable alternative route via the Northern Distributor Road/Toutley Road.

The Northern Distributor Road and associated relief-road infrastructure were constructed to provide additional highway capacity, accommodate development and, importantly, reduce congestion and the impact of through traffic on the existing local road network. Wokingham Borough Council itself has described the Northern

Distributor Road as providing an alternative route intended to reduce existing and future peak-hour congestion.

It therefore seems difficult to justify adding further residential traffic to Old Forest Road when a larger strategic road exists specifically to accommodate traffic and reduce pressure on the local residential network.

2. Alternative access has already been identified

This is not simply a hypothetical alternative raised by local residents.

During consideration of the earlier application for this site, the possibility of accessing the development from the Northern Distributor Road/Toutley Road was specifically raised. The Planning Committee record confirms that Members questioned whether this alternative access had been considered and that the land between the development site and the Northern Distributor Road is owned by Wokingham Borough Council's Estates team.

Furthermore, Wokingham Borough Council has subsequently confirmed through a Freedom of Information response that discussions took

place concerning the applicant's decision to identify access from Old Forest Road rather than Toutley Road, the Northern Wokingham Distributor Road.

This raises an important planning question which, in my view, requires proper consideration:

Why should additional traffic from this development be directed into an already congested residential environment when an alternative connection to a much larger strategic road has been identified and the land required for that connection is understood to be Council-owned?

The fact that the applicant has control of a safe access onto Old Forest Road should not, in itself, determine the most appropriate access arrangement. The question for the planning authority should be which access arrangement is most appropriate for the wider highway network and the safety and amenity of existing and future residents.

3. Existing congestion

Old Forest Road and the surrounding residential roads already experience periods of significant congestion.

The addition of traffic from a substantial new residential development will inevitably increase vehicle movements through the existing residential area. This is particularly concerning at peak times when the existing road network is already under pressure.

The purpose of strategic and relief-road infrastructure is precisely to prevent additional development traffic being unnecessarily funnelled through unsuitable or congested residential routes.

The Council should therefore consider not simply whether the proposed junction can technically operate, but whether directing the additional traffic onto Old Forest Road represents the best and most appropriate highway solution for the area as a whole.

4. Road and pedestrian safety

There are also significant road-safety considerations.

The Planning Committee's consideration of the earlier application recorded concerns regarding the width of Old Forest Road, pavement provision, street lighting and pedestrian safety. Members also raised concerns about the practicality of vehicles passing along the proposed access route and about pedestrian routes.

The fact that the highway authority has concluded that the proposed access can operate within its technical standards does not remove the wider safety issue.

The relevant question should be whether adding a substantial number

of additional vehicle movements to an established residential road is the safest solution when an alternative route to a larger strategic road may be available.

Particular consideration should be given to:

- * increased vehicle movements on Old Forest Road;
- * interaction between vehicles entering and leaving the new development and existing road users;
- * pedestrians using the existing footways;
- * cyclists and other vulnerable road users;
- * the restricted effective width of the road when vehicles are parked;
- * vehicle manoeuvring around parked cars;
- * visibility at and around the proposed new junction; and
- * the cumulative effect of these factors rather than considering the new access in isolation.

5. The sports ground opposite the proposed access

There is a further and important consideration which I believe requires specific assessment.

Directly opposite the location of the proposed new access on Old Forest Road is a sports ground which is used for both football and cricket.

On match days, the highway conditions in the area are materially different from those experienced under normal circumstances. The surrounding roads become significantly more congested as spectators and participants arrive and leave, and vehicles are frequently parked along the surrounding roads.

This creates a combination of additional vehicle movements, parked vehicles, pedestrians and people crossing the road.

The proposed development access would therefore be located immediately adjacent to an area where traffic and parking conditions can vary substantially depending upon sporting events.

This has obvious implications for highway safety.

Vehicles entering or leaving the proposed development would potentially have to negotiate Old Forest Road at times when its effective width is reduced by parked vehicles and when pedestrian activity is significantly higher than normal.

The situation could be particularly concerning where children and families are attending football or cricket matches, creating additional pedestrian movements and potentially unpredictable crossing activity.

I do not believe that an assessment based solely on normal traffic conditions adequately addresses this issue.

The Council should require the applicant to demonstrate that the proposed access remains safe and operates satisfactorily during sporting events and periods of maximum on-street parking, rather

than relying solely on average or normal-day traffic conditions.

6. Cumulative impact

The above issues should not be considered individually.

The combination of:

- * an existing residential road carrying significant traffic; *
- additional traffic generated by the proposed development; *
- an existing constrained road environment;
- * pedestrian and cycling movements;

- * on-street parking;
- * a sports ground immediately opposite the proposed access;
- * additional parking and congestion during football and cricket fixtures; and
- * the apparent availability of a more suitable connection to the northern Distributor Road/Toutley Road

creates a cumulative highway and road-safety concern.

The fact that an access can be demonstrated to be technically achievable does not necessarily mean that it is the most appropriate access solution.

7. Request to the Council

I therefore respectfully ask Wokingham Borough Council to give particular consideration to the proposed access arrangement when determining these applications.

I request that the Council:

1. does not oppose the residential development merely because of the concerns raised here, but instead requires the access arrangements to be reconsidered;
2. fully assesses the feasibility of providing access to the Northern Distributor Road/Toutley Road rather than directing development traffic through Old Forest Road;
3. considers the cumulative impact of existing congestion, development traffic, on-street parking and sporting-event traffic;
4. specifically assesses highway and pedestrian safety during football and cricket match days, when traffic and parking conditions are materially different from normal conditions; and
5. if the alternative strategic-road access is not considered feasible, requires the applicant to provide a clear and evidence-based justification explaining why the residential-road access is preferable and why the alternative has been rejected.

In conclusion, my objection is not to the houses proposed for this site. It is to the proposed means of accessing them.

It appears counter-intuitive to introduce additional development traffic into an already congested residential environment when a

substantial strategic road infrastructure exists nearby whose stated purpose includes reducing congestion and accommodating additional traffic.

I therefore ask the Council to reconsider whether Old Forest Road is genuinely the most appropriate, sustainable and safe access for this development, particularly in light of the existing congestion, pedestrian-safety concerns, sporting-event traffic and the previously identified alternative connection to the Northern Distributor Road/Toutley Road.

I respectfully request that the highway and access arrangements are reconsidered before either application is determined.