

PLANNING REF: 262274

SUBMITTED BY: Sarah Willett, Ambleside Close, Woodley, Reading, RG5 4JJ

DATE SUBMITTED: 09/10/2026

COMMENTS:

I am writing to object to this application.

Ecology. The site sits beside Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve, an established wetland habitat. A data centre of this scale will produce continuous heat, noise and light at the reserve boundary. The applicant forecasts a biodiversity net gain of between 11.53% and 22.69%, depending on which substation layout is built. These are forecasts for planting on the site. They do not address permanent disturbance to the reserve next door. The council should require evidence of the effect on the reserve itself.

Climate. The applicant's Energy Strategy estimates peak demand of about 110MW. The existing grid supply is 1.8MW. The gap would be met by natural gas fuel cells until at least 2037, and the applicant also assesses keeping them beyond that date. The Energy Strategy itself states: "Retaining gas fuel cells locks in a high, non-improving emissions profile." The applicant's Environmental Statement identifies significant adverse carbon effects at local and regional level. **This contradicts Wokingham Borough Council's commitment to become a carbon neutral borough.** If the council is minded to approve, it must set a binding end date for gas generation.

Air quality and noise. The scheme includes diesel backup generators, with flues up to 30.5 metres. The applicant predicts no significant noise or air quality effects, but only if the plant meets the proposed limits. This is an outline application, so the detail is not yet fixed. The council should have these assessments independently reviewed and secure the limits by condition, including generator testing hours.

Residential amenity. There are homes on the other side of the railway embankment. Residents will live with noise and heat from a facility that never switches off, in buildings up to 30.5 metres high.

For these reasons I ask the council to refuse the application.