

PLANNING REF : 252498
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Melrose Gardens
:
: RG2 9PZ
SUBMITTED BY : Miss A Whitesmith
DATE SUBMITTED : 15/01/2026

COMMENTS:

While additional housing is acknowledged to be required in Wokingham Borough, the scale of this development, up to 2,800 new homes plus community, retail, transport infrastructure, schools and other facilities is excessively large for this location. It represents a substantial settlement shift in what is currently predominantly agricultural land without adequate evidence that the surrounding infrastructure can sustainably support this scale of growth.

The proposals rely on major infrastructure (e.g. new bridges over the M4 and River Loddon, new road connections and upgrades) being delivered, but there is no binding assurance these critical elements will be completed before residents move in. Government planning inspectors have raised concerns about whether essential infrastructure can be delivered in line with housing delivery, particularly transport and highway capacity improvements. This means the development risks outpacing the delivery of the infrastructure required to support it. As such, the application fails to demonstrate that necessary supporting infrastructure will be in place when needed, contrary to the expectations of sustainable housing delivery.

The local road network is already under pressure. Without clear, fully funded traffic impact mitigation measures, including public transport improvements, buses, pedestrian and cycle routes to existing hubs, this development will significantly worsen congestion and journey times for residents of Arborfield, Winnersh, Shinfield, Lower Earley and neighbouring communities. The proposals do not satisfactorily demonstrate that transport impacts will be mitigated, nor that residents living outside the new village will not suffer detrimental transport conditions.

Proposals call for two primary schools and one secondary school; however, local educational facilities are already under strain, and the delivery timetable for these new schools is unclear. There is a risk that new families could arrive before sufficient school capacity, GP surgeries, dentists and other community services are available, taxing existing provisions and causing service shortfalls.

The Hall Farm/Loddon Valley area is known to be prone to flooding in parts due to its topography and proximity to the River Loddon. Although the proposal references Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS), there is insufficient evidence that these measures will be adequate given future climate change projections and existing flood history in the local area. The recent planning inspection engagement has highlighted that flood risk and sustainable drainage arrangements require more robust justification and mitigation planning.

While the application claims a 20% biodiversity net gain and significant open space provision, much of this is newly created

"green infrastructure" rather than preservation or enhancement of existing habitats. Qualitative and quantitative evidence is needed to show that biodiversity measures genuinely deliver net ecological benefit rather than simply relocating or reconfiguring habitats.

National planning policy increasingly prioritises development in locations with access to frequent public transport and existing services. The site's distance from major rail stations (e.g., Winnersh station ~3km away) and lack of significant public transport infrastructure undermines the sustainability credentials of this proposal for nearly 3,000 homes.

For the reasons set out above, I respectfully request that Planning Application 252498 be refused or deferred until detailed, binding commitments on delivery of infrastructure, environmental protection, flood resilience, transport mitigation and local service capacity are fully resolved.

I consider that in its current form the application fails to meet key tests for sustainable development under both local and national planning policy.

Thank you for considering my objection.