

: RG40 4PP
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Iain Williams
DATE SUBMITTED : 09/03/2026

COMMENTS:

I have lived at Windmill Farm Cottage for the last 29 years. The Bluebell Farm property, to which this application 252801 applies, is immediately next door to me. Between us is a bridle path, starting from Commonfield Lane and then becomes a Greenway to California Country Park.

This application derives from a previous application 240788 (refused) for the stationing of 9 static mobile homes, which in turn derived from an original application 231330 (refused) for the stationing of 14 static mobile homes. I provided comments on the original application 231330, but was NOT however subsequently informed or consulted by anyone on the subsequent applications 240788 or 252801. I became aware of 240788 at the Appeal stage and have only just now become aware of this latest application 252801.

My objections to the current application remain the same in principle to the previous two, noting that all relate to a similar development within the same site area. In the absence of comments to the contrary, and the timing for of this latest application over the Christmas period, I recommend the Council continue to have regard to comments received with respect to the previous applications 231330 and 240788.

My comments cover:

- Impact on the character of this countryside location
- Impact of cars on the bridlepath/access track which is heavily used - Various matters by reference to the National Planning policy framework

With respect to impact on the character of this countryside location: As a long-term resident, I appreciate the value of the area, its ecology and the countryside around me, including Longmoor Bog and the SSSI site. I am very concerned that the proposed development would represent a creeping and significant intensification of development, which would be out of character with the area. Notwithstanding that the site may be called previously developed land, through established uses and previous permissions, and whilst the latest application has pulled back from proposing the felling of a tree, it would still have a harmful impact on the quality of the environment when compared to the existing situation. For reference, paragraph 23 of the Inspector's decision notice on the last appeal concludes:

"In conclusion on this main issue, I accept that the site is PDL, and it would be cleared of a considerable amount of hardstanding, buildings, and chattels. It also sits near to existing mobile home developments and the SDL. In addition,

supplementary landscaping would also be proposed, which could be agreed by condition. However, the loss of a tree and uncertainty in regard to another important tree in combination with the introduction of nine mobile homes, an access running through the spine of the appeal site and the associated parking areas, stores and residential paraphernalia would, as a matter of fact and degree, have a harmful impact on the quality of the environment when compared to the existing situation."

The urbanising effects of the development still remain as part of this proposal with their consequent harmful impact on the character of the area.

a) Bluebell Farm and my home represents a low density development in an area designated as, and with a backdrop of, countryside. Permission for building an additional permanent dwelling (to replace a mobile home at Bluebell Farm) has already been given in

PLANNING REF : 252801

PROPERTY ADDRESS : Windmill Farm Cottage

: Commonfield Lane, Barkham, Berkshire

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2023, which I did not object to (ref 223783, 10/3/23) which has now been separated from the remaining site. Further development of 9 mobile homes would substantially alter the character of the area and constitute a form of 'planning creep'.

b) To the other side of me is High Barn Farm, where a Solar farm is to be developed. Planning permission was given for this on a temporary basis, with condition 28 clarifying that it was 'to allow agricultural use in the future and to SAFEGUARD the long term landscape and visual amenity of the countryside'.

c) I also note that the Draft Wokingham Borough Local Plan is very near completion. That Plan allocates land to the west of Bluebell Farm at Honeysuckle Lodge for 4 mobile homes (GRT pitches), in addition to 8 which were previously approved in 2021 (application 203626). It also proposes land one small field away to the east of me, at High Barn Farm, for 20 mobile homes (GRT pitches). This is the subject of a challenge to the plan on the grounds of soundness. These allocations will result in an undue concentration of mobile homes in this area, contrary to a stated objective of the local plan. If permission is granted for this appeal this too will result in a concentration of mobile homes in this area, regardless of the outcome of objection to the proposal at High Barn Farm.

d) This application is, in essence, an application for permanent residential development. It seems unlikely to me that permission would be granted for, say, nine houses on this site, as this would be contrary to the Council's policies. Indeed, the appropriate location for such development (of permanent homes) is the nearby Arborfield major development area.

e) Why is the development aimed at 55's and over? If this is important to the decision, how will this be monitored and enforced effectively over the medium term (noting that monitoring and enforcement of GRT sites being used as such across the Borough does not appear to have worked)? Planning conditions must be enforceable and how will this be checked? To me, this scheme seems to be a device to circumvent the protections offered by planning policy.

With respect to the impact of cars:

a) The site is located off a narrow lane, which is a well-used bridle path, which then becomes a greenway, within the open countryside, outside of any settlement limits. This is heavily used by school children and members of the public, walking, running, cycling and many with their dogs, which has necessitated the provision of lighting along its length. The proposed development will add a significant safety issue for those that use the bridle path / greenway, especially around the already dangerous crossing over Commonfield Lane.

b) More generally, the application encourages yet more traffic onto Commonfield Lane, a single track road with periodic passing spaces, which is not already not suitable for the amount of additional vehicles that now use it from the new Arborfield Green developments.

c) The provision of car park spaces is not a brake on car ownership and I am also concerned with overspill of cars onto the bridle path. The site is not in a location that encourages means of transport other than private cars (which goes against the Local Plan) and in the interests of sustainability, is not well located in relation to facilities and services. And with the age of residents required to be over 55, one may expect even more dependency on private cars than average. Being in my 60's myself, I have become very aware of how getting older increasingly affects mobility. How and where has this been considered? There are not enough spaces for cars if each home has 2 cars, and that is before any visitors. There is no other room anywhere else at all for cars other than on the bridle path. With respect to both preserving the character of the area and safety of the public, please can I ask that if you are minded to approve that a) you are satisfied to a high confidence level with the level of parking provision within the site and b) that a condition is set to prohibit cars being allowed to park on the bridlepath, which can be reasonably enforced.

With respect to other various matters by reference to the National Planning policy framework, I would be grateful for you to continue to take account of my original comments submitted on my behalf by Mark Mann of MQM Planning (dated 30 June 2023) with respect to the original application 231330.

Finally, should the application be successful:

a) please note that water is currently supplied to Bluebell Farm and my property through a small old jointly owned pipe, running the nearly the full length of Commonfield Lane. This does not have the capacity to supply the proposed development and a condition should be required to determine how an alternative sustainable water supply will be

provided.

b) I am also concerned with the extent of light pollution (at night) with this proposed development, specifically with respect to the use of 'security' floodlights, and would request a condition to mitigate against this.

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