

PLANNING REF : 250733
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Arborfield Green Community Centre
: Arborfield, Reading
: RG2 9ND
SUBMITTED BY : Barkham Parish Council
DATE SUBMITTED : 16/05/2025

COMMENTS:

Barkham Parish Council objects to the above application for the reasons outlined below, which relate to significant conflict with adopted and emerging planning policy, unacceptable impact on local infrastructure, and concerns over the premature and piecemeal nature of the proposal.

1. Conflict with the Wokingham Borough Council Local Plan Update (LPU) Submission - The proposed residential development is not identified within the Section 19 submission version of the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update. As such, it conflicts with the Borough's spatial development strategy and is contrary to the planned and coordinated approach to housing delivery.

Relevant Policies: WBC Policies CP9 (Scale and Location of Development Proposals), CP11 (Proposals Outside Development Limits)

2.

Non-Compliance with the Barkham and Arborfield Neighbourhood Plan - The proposal conflicts with several key policies within the Barkham and Arborfield Neighbourhood Plan, which forms part of the statutory development plan:

- Policy IRS1 (preservation and separation of settlements) - The development would erode the physical and visual separation between settlements, undermining their distinct identities.

- Policy IRS2 (Recognise, Respect and Preserve Identity and rural setting of settlements) - The proposal fails to respect the rural setting and unique identity of the area. The scale and density proposed are inappropriate to the character of the area and not justified by local plan evidence.

- Policy IRS4 (Protection and enhancement of historic character of the area - There is insufficient regard to the historic character of the site and surrounding area.

- Policy AD1 (New developments within settlement boundaries) - The application site lies outside defined settlement boundaries and does not comply with criteria for appropriate development.

- Policy GA1 (Minimise additional traffic on unsuitable Roads) - The transport plan lacks credible mitigation and fails to address existing congestion.

- Policy GA3 (Public transport improvements with long term viability) - The development lacks demonstrable long-term viability in terms of public transport provision.

In addition, the development does not constitute sustainable growth and would place undue pressure on local infrastructure and services.

3. Highways and Traffic Impact - The proposed access arrangements would direct a significant volume of traffic onto Langley Common Road, a route already suffering from peak-time congestion and high daily traffic volumes (circa 5,000 vehicles). The absence of meaningful highway mitigation is a major concern, particularly in light of cumulative development pressures in the area.

Relevant Policies: Neighbourhood Plan Policies GA1 and GA3; WBC Policies CP3(a) (General Principles of Development), CP4 (Infrastructure)

4. Prematurity and Piecemeal

Development - The proposal represents a speculative application that precedes the adoption of the Local Plan Update. Approving this development would undermine the plan-led approach to growth, and risk setting a precedent for further unplanned and uncoordinated expansion in the area.

Relevant Policies: WBC Policies CP1 (Sustainability), CP6 (Infrastructure Needs), CP18 (Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location)

5. Inconsistency with Core Strategy and

Sustainability Objectives - The proposal is inconsistent with the overarching sustainability principles and strategic development objectives set out in the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy. It fails to demonstrate how it will deliver inclusive, well-supported communities or appropriately located development.

Relevant Policies: WBC Policies CP1 (Sustainability), CP2(b) (Inclusive Communities), CP3(a), CP6, CP9, CP11

In summary, this application conflicts with both the adopted Neighbourhood Plan and Wokingham Borough planning policies. It is premature in advance of the new Local Plan, represents piecemeal development outside settlement boundaries, and fails to adequately mitigate its impacts on infrastructure and character. For these reasons, Barkham Parish Council strongly urges the Local Planning Authority to refuse this application.