

PLANNING REF : 261695
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 18
: Hart Dyke Close, Wokingham, Berkshire
: RG412HQ
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Paula Meades
DATE SUBMITTED : 29/08/2026

COMMENTS:

Re: Objection to Planning Application 261695 - Luckley House School,
Luckley Road, Wokingham, RG40 3EU

I am writing to strongly object to Planning Application 261695 and ask Wokingham Borough Council to refuse planning permission.

I have lived in Wokingham all my life and have lived near the site for nearly 30 years. I know the area around Luckley Road, Woodcra and Finchampstead North very well.

My main concern is the principle of developing this land. Wokingham Borough Council's own planning evidence identifies the site as designated open countryside. It also forms part of the open landscape and important separation between Wokingham and Finchampstead North.

The character and location of this land are important considerations when deciding whether it is suitable for development.

The previous Planning Inspector's decision in appeal APP/X0360/W/19/3235572, dated 25 August 2020, is highly relevant. Although that appeal concerned a different proposal, the Inspector recognised the open, rural and tranquil character of the wider area beyond Wokingham's urban edge. That description is still relevant to this site today.

The proposal raises concerns under the Council's policies protecting the countryside and landscape, including CP11, CC03 and TB21.

This is not simply the provision of playing fields. The proposal includes 6-metre-high ball-stop netting, a 3.5-metre acoustic fence, fencing, goalposts and other associated equipment. These structures would be highly visible and would change the appearance and character of the site, particularly given how close they would be to neighbouring properties.

Noise is also a significant issue. Organised sporting activity immediately alongside homes would introduce shouting, whistles, balls being struck and general activity from players and coaches. If outside clubs use the facilities, this could extend into evenings and weekends. I don't believe the proposed acoustic fence would prevent the disturbance, while the fence itself would be a large and intrusive structure close to neighbouring homes. This would affect residential amenity and is contrary to MDD Policy CC06.

There is also a high risk of balls leaving the playing areas and entering neighbouring gardens. Given the proximity of the pitches to existing properties, this could result in damage to property and interfere with residents' enjoyment of their gardens.

The increased use of the site would bring additional vehicle movements, drop-offs and parking demand onto surrounding residential roads.

Flooding is another serious consideration. I have personally witnessed regular flooding along the northern boundary of the site, particularly around its midpoint, and I have photographs which I can provide to the Council. Changing the use and treatment of the land could affect existing drainage and potentially displace water towards neighbouring land and properties. MDD Policies CC09 - Development and Flood Risk and CC10 - Sustainable Drainage are relevant to these concerns.

The existing trees, hedgerows and wildlife are also important features of the site. I am anxious about damage to trees and their roots during construction of the acoustic fence and from the ongoing use of the pitches. People standing close to trees and repeated foot traffic can cause soil compaction within their Root Protection Areas, potentially damaging roots and affecting the long-term health and stability of the trees. Increased activity and associated infrastructure would also affect the existing habitat.

There is also the question over the need for additional sports provision in this location. The school already has sports facilities and uses facilities elsewhere. Wokingham Borough Council is also progressing plans for the proposed Grays Farm Sports Hub off Heathlands Road, including grass and artificial pitches, a pavilion, car parking and associated facilities.

Luckley House School is within walking distance of the proposed Grays Farm Sports Hub. Given the school's existing sports facilities and the substantial additional provision planned nearby, the need to develop this particular piece of open land for further sports use has not been demonstrated.

I also understand that the school has longer-term plans for further sports facilities and that the school's Bursar has told our local committee that the school intends eventually to provide a football pitch and pavilion. While any future proposals would require separate planning applications, this adds to the worry about further development on the site.

The history of this land should also be taken into account. Wokingham as a community came together to campaign to save these fields, with almost 500 people objecting to the proposal - I believe this to be a record level of public objection. The Planning Inspector subsequently ruled that the site was unsuitable for development.

This demonstrates how strongly the local community values these fields and the surrounding open landscape.

The issues raised above - the status of the land, its landscape character, the effect of the proposed structures and sporting activity, residential amenity, drainage, trees and ecology, traffic, and the lack of a clear need for this particular location - all weigh against the proposal.

This is not simply an objection to the size or design of the proposed facilities. The site should remain open and undeveloped, and no development, however small, should be permitted here.

For all these reasons, I strongly object to Planning Application 261695 and respectfully ask Wokingham Borough Council to refuse planning permission.