

PLANNING REF : 261695
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 16 Hart Dyke Close
: Wokingham, Berkshire
: RG41 2HQ
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Oluwafemi Bamiro
DATE SUBMITTED : 06/09/2026

COMMENTS:

Planning Reference: 261695 - Luckley House School, Luckley Road, Wokingham RG40 3EU: Proposed Sports Pitches and Associated External Works

I live at 16 Hart Dyke Close and am a member of the HDC ACE group. Having reviewed the Luckley House proposal, I object for the reasons set out below.

1. Unacceptable Proximity of the Rugby Try Line to Homes

The proposed rugby try line and in-goal area sit immediately beside Hart Dyke Close. For the most affected homes, the fence appears only 5-7m from main living areas and bedrooms.

A pitch should not be assessed as a single uniform noise source. The try line is where high-energy shouting, player contact, spectators and referee whistles are concentrated.

The NIA records referee whistles at 110 dB but does not model this localised worst case at the closest point to residents. Locating the loudest part of the sport beside a residential boundary is poor design and would harm residential amenity.

Shouting, cheering and match tension at the try line are intermittent and highly intelligible, making them more intrusive than steady traffic noise and requiring an acoustic character penalty.

2. Failure to Model Simultaneous Use of Both Pitches

The application seeks permission for two rugby pitches, but the NIA treats the development as a generalised single source. Doubling comparable sources increases total acoustic energy by +3 dB.

The NIA does not assess two competitive matches taking place at once, with two referees using 110 dB whistles, double the competitive shouting and larger spectator numbers. This understates the likely impact on Hart Dyke Close.

3. Football Use and Ball-to-Fence Impact Noise Not Properly Assessed

Although the NIA assesses rugby speech levels and cricket net impacts, the area could also be used for competitive football.

Earlier school correspondence referred to rugby and football pitches, and a football layout could place a goal beside Hart Dyke Close.

Football would create more continuous shouting and repeated ball impacts on perimeter fencing, including metallic clatter, wooden thuds and low-frequency vibration. The NIA does not model this common source of sports-pitch complaints.

4. The Proposal Fails the Applicant's Own Sport England Criteria

Section 3.1 of the applicant's NIA states that, under Sport England guidance, noise from a new facility should ideally not exceed the existing noise climate, measured using LAeq.

The applicant's data does not meet that test:

- Table 4.2 of the NIA establishes the existing school operational ambient noise climate as 48 dB (LAeq).

- Table 7.1 predicts 50 dB (LAeq,1hour) at Hart Dyke Close even with a substantial mitigation screen, and actual intermittent peaks will exceed this level.

The proposal would raise ambient noise above the existing baseline and sit 15 dB above the typical 35 dB (LA90) background level, degrading a quiet residential edge-of-countryside setting. Given the proximity of living areas, the 35 dB internal limit in HC8 of the Local Plan Update is also likely to be breached, particularly when windows or bi-fold doors are open.

5. Peak Noise Events Would Double Perceived Loudness

The NIA downplays maximum noise spikes, yet Table 4.2 records existing daytime peaks of 58 dB (LAmax), while Table 7.1 predicts regular rugby peaks of 68 dB (LAmax) at Hart Dyke Close.

Appendix A, Section 1.3 of the applicant's report states that a 10 dB change is perceived as a doubling of loudness.

On that basis, sudden shouts and whistle blasts would sound twice as loud as current peak noise, intruding into gardens and homes and affecting rest and home working.

6. Sports Noise Character Is Underestimated

Venta Acoustics' 3D CADNA-A model uses "Raised Voice" at 67 dB(A) at 1m for rugby voices.

Competitive rugby is more accurately represented by "Shouted Voices", which Table 5.3 gives as 82 dB at 1m. The use of a lower baseline artificially reduces the predicted impact.

7. Omission of Additional Noise Sources

The assessment excludes crowd, supporter and coach noise, despite these being significant during competitive matches. Existing use of Luckley's facilities, including loud PA systems, shows this is a real concern.

Cricket noise is also understated because the assessment considers cricket nets, not match play where players shout across the field. The athletics track is ignored, although Luckley sports days already generate substantial shouting and cheering. The assessment should also confirm whether starter pistols would be prohibited.

8. Flawed or Missing Baseline Survey

The NIA says a November survey was undertaken at a location representative of surrounding homes. However, site plan VA6149/SP1 appears to place the monitor close to the current school playing-field boundary, while the most affected receiver is about 90-100m away at the opposite end of the field. Background noise there is likely to be lower; the previous application's report noted birdsong as dominant. The school has also cleared boundary bushes and hedges, reducing noise screening. The survey should confirm whether this clearance occurred before monitoring and whether nearby temporary building works were avoided.

9. Unacceptable Omission of Evening and Weekend Lettings Impact

Section 2 states that the pitches may allow "limited club or public use outside of school hours", yet the NIA includes no modelling for evening or weekend use.

Evening and weekend background noise is lower than weekday traffic levels. High-intensity club use during these sensitive periods would therefore cause greater disturbance. The NIA is deficient for failing to assess these rest-time impacts.

10. Severe Loss of Visual Amenity from the Proposed 3.5m Acoustic Screen

Section 6 requires a 3.5m-high continuous, solid, imperforate acoustic screen along roughly 140m of residential boundary.

This screen is required only because of the poor layout and site unsuitability. A solid 3.5m barrier beside Hart Dyke Close would be oppressive and overbearing, causing loss of outlook, daylight and garden amenity. The need for such an industrial-scale barrier

demonstrates that this field is the wrong location for high-intensity rugby pitches.

11. Mitigations/Noise Management Plan

The NIA's "Noise Management Plan" is not a plan. It offers only broad suggestions, mainly asking staff, students and spectators to remember nearby residents and keep quiet. This is unrealistic for a school sports environment, particularly during competitive matches. It also gives no detail on staffing, enforcement, monitoring or sanctions. With a large fence in place, players and spectators may be even less aware of nearby homes.

Conclusion and Requested Action

The proposal conflicts with NPPF Paragraph 180, which requires development to be appropriate to its location and to mitigate adverse noise impacts. It would move our homes from a Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level (LOAEL) to a Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level (SOAEL), harming residents' health, wellbeing and living conditions. We respectfully ask Wokingham Borough Council to reject this application and prevent the creeping urbanisation of a green field.