

Planning Ref: 261625

Submitted by: Mr and Mrs Graham Paterson

Address: 46 Harcourt Drive, Earley, RG6 5TJ

Date Submitted: 29/7/2026

Comments:

We wish to object to this application and request the Council to assess whether it fully complies with the Council's Emerging Local Plan Policy H8. Also that it complies with the Council's wider objectives of protecting residential amenity and highway safety. The applicant claims that its proposal complies with Policy H8, yet in several respects it appears not to, as noted below:

1. In this already highly-congested residential street, the proposal lacks any evidence that, for an 8-bedroom HMO, just two off-street parking places would suffice – ie the same number as the existing house. No parking survey, transport assessment, car ownership study or evidence of existing parking conditions has been provided. The applicant claims that the proposal would not increase pressure on surrounding streets - concerns that have been expressed by WBC's councillors over many years – following increased overspill parking since RBC introduced parking charges along Pepper Lane. Inevitably, there were, and are, increased safety and obstruction risks for residents of this narrow Harcourt Drive and nearby WBC streets. These dangers and inconveniences would be further exacerbated by this proposal.

2. The proposal contains little or no assessment of the impacts on, and implications for, neighbouring residential amenity, as required in WBC's Emerging Local Plan Policy H8 - including the wider objectives of protecting residential amenity and highway safety. The proposal claims no increase in noise nor disturbance from 8 residents, their visitors, deliveries, refuse generation and increased activity resulting from a large HMO. There is no evidence to support this claim.

3. The concentration of HMOs in Harcourt Drive already

We understand that the Wokingham HMO register identifies at least 3 HMOs in Harcourt Drive that are already registered – possibly more – and there appears to be a discrepancy between the applicant's calculation of the proportion, that at least 4 HMOs in Harcourt Drive would represent, and our own calculation of 6.25%.

This apparent discrepancy calls into question the accuracy of other applicant statements. We would therefore request that the Council verifies the applicant's methodology, in order to ensure that existing and proposed HMO concentration is accurate and up-to-date. In addition, H8 states that proposals "should not....unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant overconcentration of flats or HMOs". We do not believe that the proposal complies with this Policy.

4. Lack of robust evidence for several other assertions in the proposal

a. There is no supporting evidence-based technical data that there will be no increase in traffic movements, nor that 2 parking spaces are adequate for a proposed 8-bedroom HMO

b. That noise and disturbance will not increase and that refuse storage is sufficient

We believe that further evidence is required before the Council can be satisfied that the proposal would not adversely affect the character and fully functioning of the surrounding residential area.

While most Harcourt Drive residents have lived in this predominantly family housing area for many years, several have moved or passed away in the last few years. Accordingly, WBC's Emerging Local Policy Plan H8 is therefore particularly apposite in order to ensure no future loss of good family dwellings within a stable, peaceful, albeit already congested, community area.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.