

PLANNING REF : 252498  
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Sussex Lane  
:  
: RG7 1BY  
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Mark Horner  
DATE SUBMITTED : 11/11/2025

COMMENTS:

1. Inadequate Ground Drainage and Flood Risk

The proposed development site lies within an area that is already known to experience surface water and fluvial flooding, being in close proximity to the River Loddon and several low-lying fields with poor natural drainage.

Although the application refers to the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and "drainage and flood alleviation measures," the scale of the proposal introducing thousands of dwellings, roads, and impermeable surfaces poses a significant risk of exacerbating flood conditions both on-site and downstream. The existing local drainage infrastructure is not designed to accommodate the volume of run-off that would result from this level of urbanisation. Without clear, site-specific evidence of capacity, maintenance arrangements, and long-term resilience of the proposed SuDS network, the proposal fails to demonstrate compliance with: Local Plan Policy CC09 (Managing Flood Risk) NPPF Paragraphs 159-169, which require that development should not increase flood risk elsewhere.

Residents of Arborfield and surrounding villages have already experienced periodic flooding along Church Lane and the Loddon Valley, and this proposal risks worsening these conditions significantly. 2. Insufficient Road Infrastructure and Traffic Impact

The existing A327, Church Lane, and surrounding road network already operate under heavy strain, particularly during peak commuting hours. The introduction of up to 2,800 dwellings, in addition to schools, commercial units, and other facilities, will dramatically increase traffic volumes, placing an unsustainable burden on: The A327 corridor through Arborfield and Shinfield; Local junctions including the Observer Way roundabout and Lower Earley Way; The M4 access routes, which already experience congestion.

The proposed new access points and bridges, while ambitious, do not sufficiently mitigate the cumulative effect of traffic from this scale of development, particularly given that nearby strategic developments (e.g., Arborfield Green, Shinfield West) are also generating significant vehicular movements. This scale of urbanisation is not supported by the existing road network capacity or the current level of public transport provision. The result would likely be increased congestion, noise, and air pollution, directly conflicting with: Local Plan Policy CP6 (Managing Travel Demand); NPPF Paragraph 110, which requires developments to provide safe and suitable access for all users and avoid severe cumulative impacts on the transport network.

3. Loss of Countryside Character and Environmental Impact The proposed site forms part of the open countryside and agricultural land that currently provides an important green buffer between Arborfield, Shinfield, and Earley. Developing this area for

intensive residential and mixed-use purposes would result in:  
Irreversible loss of rural landscape character and productive farmland;

Habitat destruction and fragmentation for local wildlife along the Loddon Valley corridor;

Detrimental effects on the setting of St Bartholomew's Church, a historic listed building, contrary to Policy TB24 (Heritage Assets). Although the proposal includes "Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)" and biodiversity measures, these do not adequately compensate for the scale of landscape loss and ecological disturbance caused by the conversion of 40+ hectares of countryside into built development.

This is contrary to:

Local Plan Policy CP11 (Proposals Outside Development Limits), which seeks to protect the countryside from inappropriate development;

NPPF Paragraph 180, which requires that development should protect and enhance biodiversity and the intrinsic character of the countryside. 4. Conclusion

For the reasons above, I strongly object to this planning application on the following grounds:

The proposal fails to demonstrate adequate drainage and flood prevention, risking increased flooding locally and downstream. The existing road and transport infrastructure cannot sustainably support the scale of development proposed, leading to congestion and pollution.

The scheme represents a significant and unacceptable loss of countryside, undermining local landscape character, biodiversity, and heritage settings.

Accordingly, this application should be refused until these fundamental issues are satisfactorily addressed.