

PLANNING REF : 251143
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Waltham Road
:
: RG109EE
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs NS Slater
DATE SUBMITTED : 06/10/2025

COMMENTS:

I object to the planning application.

Although I do not currently live in the area, I am moving into one of the White Cottages soon and therefore will be affected by this application. I do not have an issue per se with polo being played in the countryside for personal enjoyment, but this application is detrimental to the Green Belt, to agriculture, and to residents and visitors alike and the size and scale seems more fitting for commercial rather than personal use, and I am concerned not just about what has been included in this application but also about what has been omitted particularly in regard to detail and independent, factual evidence. The biggest issues that I have with this application are:

1. Every single element of the landholding will be changed (bar for the external boundaries which cannot be changed as the landholding is surrounded by public highway on three sides and a byway on the fourth)- the reclassification of land use, the introduction of bricks and mortar structures on open farmland, the change to its current spatial and visual elements from open to enclosed, the additions of manmade materials on farmland, the habitat changes, the intensification of potential carcinogenic material in the air, and the introduction of elements not previously sited here all of which would have a majorly adverse effect on the landscape; and
2. The introduction of risks that had previously not been in issue ranging from the siting and size of the reservoir, the nuisance elements of smell, noise, vermin etc, the siting of the sewage treatment, the likely increase in crime, the increase in emissions, traffic issues and dangers with the proposed new access on the A4130, and release of particulate matter every day of the year etc.

In respect of equine activity and planning much of the application is in contravention of Policy DH7 1c :The location of new buildings, stables, yard areas and associated facilities do not respect the amenities of surrounding occupiers; and against Policy ER3 as there is no genuine need to support a new rural enterprise as the land was being farmed previously ie the land had not fallen into disuse; The scale and nature of the proposed development is not appropriate to its rural location; the proposed conversions, buildings or structures are not of a scale which is proportionate to its use nor do they reflect and respect the character of the rural setting; There will be significant adverse impacts to the amenity of nearby residents, including through odour, noise, vermin, lighting and daily operations; and the traffic generated will be inappropriate for the rural road network and even if the entrance is on the A4130 drivers will still use Culham Lane to access the A4130 and the main gate if it is a shorter journey for them. In addition this Development proposal for what is in effect a full farm diversification will not retain the viability of the farm and its agricultural enterprise. Under Green Belt policy the aim is to keep land permanently open provide

opportunities for people to access a rural environment, protect land for agriculture, forestry and similar land uses, and for nature conservation. This application does none of these and will put people off from accessing the Upper Culham rural environment and takes land away from agriculture and reduces the areas available for nature. Throughout this application, minimal thought has been given to the rights of the residents of Upper Culham and the surrounding areas of Remenham, Cockpole Green, Middle Culham and Crazies Hill, , and the application seems solely to benefit the applicant at the expense of those who reside here.

While the applicant states that the land is of moderate value that is not the overall picture of the land. The moderate value lies in the position of the land and much of the South East will fall into this category unless it is an AONB or listed or have some other designation. This is not due to the specific character of Upper Culham but due to its position close to urban centres and should be balanced up with other factors

Looking at a more granular level, Upper Culham is in the Green Belt and has been designated as an AoSC. Upper Culham farmhouse and Upper Culham Farm are both deemed to be non heritage assets that positively contribute to the AoSC . Although the land itself is not shown in the designated outline of the AoSC the fact that there are separate designations for the Farmhouse and the Farm suggests that the implication was that the land would be counted in the AoSC or at least contributed towards the overall assessment of the area, and I believe this should be taken into consideration. The planners will also be aware that there had been plans to include this area in the extended Chilterns AONB, thus, again, suggesting the very special nature of this area which should be protected.

I cannot see any reference to the soil classification at Upper Culham Farm in the application, which is of great importance as the soil type forms part of planning and, in general, poor soil types (generally Grades 4 and 5 should be used in regard to planning/change of use). Having looked at the Defra Map, it suggests that the land at Upper Culham Farm is designated as Grade 2. Grade 2 is considered Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land, and planning policies should aim to protect it on national policy. This is reflected within Wokingham's own policies.

Where the soil is Grade 3 or above then there is a need to:

- protect and enhance landscapes, biodiversity, geology and soils
- recognise soils as a natural capital asset that provide important ecosystem services
- consider the economic and other benefits of BMV agricultural land, and try to use areas of poorer quality land instead of higher quality land
- prevent soil, air, water, or noise pollution, or land instability from new and existing development

This application removes a natural capital asset and will cause soil, air, water and noise pollution on BMV agricultural land. The soil grade is more important than the more generalised land classification of moderate.

The applicant has used tables to conclude that the loss of visual

amenity is low (or at most medium) to the residents at 1-4 White Cottages. However, this has been done on an external basis and without any visual confirmation particularly from 1-4 White Cottages. If someone had been inside the cottages to see the impact on their visual amenity it is likely they would come to a different conclusion as they would be working on a factual basis and not on conjecture or assumption.

Using the tables supplied by the applicant, the classification for 1-4 White Cottages (and potentially other properties within Upper Culham and Ashley Hill Place) is likely to be:

Table 7: MEDIUM

Table 8, HIGH Includes occupiers of residential properties and people engaged in recreational activities in the countryside using public rights of way (PROW).

Table 9, HIGH. Visual receptor defined as being of medium value combined with a high susceptibility to change.

Table 10, HIGH Major change in the view that has a substantial influence on the overall view.

Overall impact: HIGH

In regard to the GLVIA3 receptor mentioned in the application, this specifically states an important receptor is the change to the aesthetic aspects such as the sense of openness, tranquillity, or naturalness. with the value being the importance attached to the landscape or view, which can be based on planning designations, cultural associations, or its importance to people using the landscape. The fact that Upper Culham Farm is mentioned in the AoSC and that the Chilterns AONB could have covered the area and for centuries this landscape and view has been unchanged also adds weight to this. It is part of our local fabric, part of what makes this area what it is, it has been farmed and enjoyed in its unchanged state by residents, walkers, cyclists and riders for centuries, abuts or forms part of the Berkshire Loop (part of the Chiltern Way) and is Green Belt Land with one of the highest soil classifications and all these reflect the value attached to this land by many people over many generations and its open plateau topography is unique in the borough.

The applicant's assertion that polo is a rural activity simply means that it is something often associated with the countryside which adds little weight to why the land should be recategorized from

agricultural to equine and fails to consider that there are polo clubs in urban and semi-urban areas as well. Polo has become more rural not due to it belonging intrinsically to the countryside but based

simply on the size of landholding needed to play polo which is unlikely nowadays to be found in or near urban centres. You can have rural towns, but that doesn't mean you would get planning to create a new town on this land just because of that designation.

Given the amount of demolition and construction on the site for at least 52 weeks, and then the intensity of maintenance, the continual noise, the constant deliveries, staff vehicular movements, increase in built structures, levelling and urbanising the land with groomed pitches, hardcore and asphalt and the increase in smells, light etc, there will be little difference between living next to this and the many Amazon warehouses sited outside an urban area (ie technically

rural). Allowing this application would impact on the landscape's character, features, and visual amenity.

There are references to this currently being intensively farmed with the connotation that this is environmentally unfriendly and not good for the countryside. However, intensive farming simply means that the land is managed with financial input, use of some spraying and the use of machinery such as tractors and combine harvesters. It is how the majority of land is farmed in the UK and is not something that should be condemned. There is also a point made about how farming uses biocides and the implication that that would cease if this was a polo estate which is simply not true. Polo fields need to be sprayed to

kill weeds, remove ragwort (often multiple times a year) and to prevent growth of various fungi etc. Therefore spraying of industrial chemicals and the health risks associated with that will take place on a regular basis (and potentially more often than when it was farmed) over the same landholding but this time it will not be in order to preserve crops so that the nation can be fed and to increase food security but to enable one person to have manicured leisure facilities for personal use.

Not only that but at least twice a year (more if the playing surface is degraded through use) the pitches need to be covered by sand and this is recommended at 200 tonnes per pitch - therefore there will also be the delivery and spreading of 800 tonnes of sand minimum per year and the associated machinery for spreading and compacting that - the largest trucks carry around 20 tonnes therefore over a year there will be a minimum of 40 large tipper trucks delivering sand which has not been included on the vehicle activity plan. During Spring the grass needs to be cut to 5cm at all times and then to 3cm in March/April and mowed on a daily/every other day basis during the growing season and playing season, this will be with an industrial mower where the operator will need to wear ear defenders under health and safety legislation but will be taking place right next to the White Cottages, additionally tonnes of fertiliser will need to be delivered (not on the vehicle movement plan) and be applied with heavy machinery in springtime, and throughout the year debris needs to be removed from the pitches via more heavy machinery such as a commercial mower with a collector or a sweeper. The pitches need to be scarified on a regular basis and divots replaced on a regular basis, again, using machinery, further scarification takes place in autumn as does the reseedling of all the area meaning additional delivery of tonnes of seed (not on the vehicle movement plan) that is not native but will be a mix of tough and hardwearing grasses that will be cut so short that they will provide neither food or shelter or refuge to animals and no flora will be able to grow as it will be cut down to a few

centimetres every day and so this adds no ecological benefit and again this will be seeded with heavy machinery, then further cutting,

scarification and draining also take place throughout the autumn and winter. The current farming activity takes place intensively for roughly 6-12 weeks a year to include, planting, spraying, harvesting and ploughing. The polo upkeep continues for 52 weeks a year. It is the polo that is intensive and will be creating noise, dust, release of particulate matter from the heavy machinery and deliveries, a surfeit of chemicals and impacting on our amenity every single day of the year, not the current farming.

Net Zero and carbon capture - there is drive towards net zero. What impact will this have on carbon capture and how does it align with net zero? Has an assessment been undertaken that compares the difference between its current use and the proposed use? Will the proposed use increase or decrease the land's sustainability, emissions of CO2 etc in relation to its current use? What will be the CO2 produced overall on an annual basis compared to it being farmed?. In regard to the claim that this will increase the biodiversity net gain, I cannot see any factual evidence of this such as a professional biodiversity metric. It is also difficult to see that given the removal of so much of the natural farmed land, the increase of asphalt, human activity, diesel powered vehicles and machinery that the planting proposed would achieve the 10% BNG needed without resorting to buying credits which negates the whole point where this has no greater benefit to society ie it is not enhancing a public green space.

Polo - each pitch is the equivalent to approximately 8 football pitches and the size of the reservoir to accommodate the amount of water is equal to multiple Olympic size swimming pools. If the applicant had applied for planning on the basis of his love of football and had included (for his own personal use, as stated) 16 football pitches, a running track, changing rooms, a pavilion with full kitchen and entertainment area, multiple Olympic sized swimming pools with associated plant, studio rooms for over 150 players, plus a rehab centre, would this be deemed to be suitable for the Green Belt land and other policies because, in effect, this is what is being proposed and the basis for such a football-based application would be on most of the same grounds as the applicant has put forward for the polo enterprise.

The construction stage is scheduled to take place for at least 12 months and will entail dust, noise and other nuisance activity. For 1-4 White Cottages they will also be next to what is in effect a quarry while the reservoir is dug out. After construction the noise, smells and dust will continue which will be of detriment to health. Both my daughter and I suffer from asthma and one of the reasons for moving from a town to here was to ensure that our health benefitted. My mother suffers from COPD and it is unlikely that she will be able to visit as her condition would not allow it. My 6-year-old nephew has Down Syndrome and autism and is extremely noise sensitive. Part of moving was to be able to see him more as the traffic noises in town are upsetting to him. He lives in a rural area himself and I had hoped that by moving to a quiet country location he would be able to visit it more often and would not face the triggers he does in a town. The development and then the polo activity so close to the White Cottages will deprive me of contact with him.

The work is taking place on a chalk plateau and it is known that exposure to chalk particles, even at low concentrations, is associated with short and long-term health effects such as respiratory disorders, skin, eye, throat, and nose irritation and symptoms such as coughing and wheezing. These symptoms can be particularly problematic for individuals with pre-existing

respiratory conditions such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and allergies. Furthermore, construction sites can generate and emit many different types of pollution but the main concerns for human health is the 'dust' or ultra fine particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen dioxide. On construction sites these pollutants are produced by the diesel engines and static engines as well as dust being mechanically generated from activities such as demolition and earthworks. This harmful dust can remain suspended in the air for many days or even weeks. The health impacts of these pollutants can include:

- Respiratory illness, cardiovascular disease and mortality as well as lung cancer
- Reduced lung function (especially in children)
- There are also very strong links to early onset dementia and autism. The fine particulate matter in diesel engine exhaust is classed as being carcinogenic to humans and in 2004 the World Health Organisation (WHO) advised that there is no evidence of a safe level of PM exposure or a threshold below which no adverse health effects could occur.

Therefore, allowing this application exposes the residents of Upper Culham and the surrounding settlements to particulate matter and increases their risk of cancers as well as dementia and will trigger my, my daughters and many other residents' asthma. It will be impossible to negate those risks given the amount of work needed on the site, the prolonged time to complete it, and ongoing PM emissions from the various lorries and other vehicles that will be constantly on site both during construction and for the day to day running of the site for the future. In effect, allowing this application would play Russian roulette with our health and increase our risk of cancer, early death and dementia.

The amount of horses and the associated feeds and hay storage, the muck heap which has been moved significantly closer to the residential properties and the inclusion of the large reservoir will increase the amount of noxious smells as well as rats, mice, horseflies (which my partner is allergic to), houseflies, botflies and mosquitos and midges. It will be a detriment to all residents who will be unable to enjoy their outside space in the day or at night due to these (as well as other nuisances including noise, smells etc). In regard to pest control, it is almost impossible to control insects without strong insecticides which may also be carcinogenic, therefore, the conclusion is that either we will be subjected to additional potentially carcinogenic chemical control methods or be inundated with flies (leading to maggots), and biting insects on a level that will impact our peaceful enjoyment of our homes. In regard to vermin there is no assessment of how this will increase (which it undoubtedly will), how it will impact on the residents (disease, damage, etc) or how it will be controlled. Rats that have been poisoned are known to cause the death of red kites and their chicks (a protected species) as well as other animals and lead is not banned for small calibre weapons (those weapons likely used for shooting rats) and kites are killed by lead poisoning from this too. How is this to be managed?

There is likely to be an increase in criminal activity in regard to the scale and type of activity where high value items and animals

are
kept.

Both on the main A4130 and on Culham Lane there will be an increase in traffic. During the development, there will be large amounts of construction lorries, excavators etc all of which will cause tailbacks on the main commuter route to and from Henley / Maidenhead and the

A404 link to the M40 and M4. There is an increased chance of accidents where car drivers and cyclists are more likely to suffer serious or fatal injuries due to the size of the vehicles using the site and the siting of the access.

The whole nature of the plateau will change and will include non-horizontal elements of bricks and mortar such as the pavilion, the pumping station (both the sizes of small residential dwellings), trees etc and it is likely (having seen other planning applications in other boroughs) that future development of the land including more polo pitches, accommodation both for leisure and workers and more roads will be applied for.

I have very serious concerns regarding the reservoir, and the information on the plans does not address what would happen in any worse case scenario which is against the Government's recent policies on water-holding facilities in the wake of the Toddbrook incident and the Balmforth review.

There seems to be no input from the Environmental Agency, no flood modelling of worst case scenario of inundation and the likely risk to life and property, no modelling of damage to property and roads in the event of any type of flooding or water egress including consistent low level leakage and no assessment regarding what should be the

acceptable safety margin in metres between the reservoir and the road and the White Cottages. Much of the information is based on the current flood risk which is minimal due to there being no bodies of water in the vicinity. That current risk has been extrapolated for the whole site to keep at a low level classification without any detailed consideration of the introduction of a reservoir and how that will change the risk zones.

Land management agencies suggests only creating bodies of water this size on clay and as far away from residential properties and local infrastructure as possible. The land here is chalk and even though the plans say it will be lined (which may not be environmentally friendly) this does not negate the risk. It will be difficult to see if the lining is damaged given the size and depth of it (which lies within the porous chalk strata) plus not all parts not seem to be lined and therefore there is a high risk that water may be seeping into the chalk layer which may then cause damage to foundation of the reservoir as well as to the roads and the White Cottages over time and lead to a breach in time. The siting of the reservoir, which could have been placed elsewhere, is right next to residential properties and local infrastructure.

In the event of a catastrophic failure or unusual weather conditions or a sudden increase in groundwater levels, there does not seem to be any way that additional amount of water could be removed quickly enough to prevent problems nor is there a wide margin area for any flooding to remain on the plateau and the applicant's land

In the event that the reservoir overtopped or collapsed it could release thousands of cubic metres of water. Due to the siting of the reservoir on the edge of the land and the topography here, then because White Cottages sit lower than the bank of the field opposite where the reservoir is proposed in the event of a breach at the bottom or left hand side of the reservoir they would be in the path

of the flood and receive the full volume of water and water would also flood down the public highway towards Cockpole Green. In the event that the reservoir breached along the top or the right side then it will follow the topography and firstly, some of the water will flow into the neighbouring farmer's fields adjacent to the restricted byway, destroying crops or harming livestock (or both) but because the land slopes down towards the public highway and the proposed volume within the reservoir, it would not stop there but would also flow down the restricted byway and then funnel down the road at a high velocity as the road will act like a mill race as the water cannot escape into surrounding fields due to the high banks on the roadside at this point, which will increase the speed of the water flow exponentially which increases the risk of damage and injury or loss of life. The water can only dissipate once it reaches the properties in Cockpole Green and down Worleys Lane and it is feasible it could carry on into Crazies Hill itself. Not only is there a real risk of death or injury to any road users (including cars, walkers, cyclists and riders) but there would be a substantial amount of properties that would be damaged, the road would need to be closed and filled and resurfaced at great expense to the local authority, great impact to road users including emergency vehicles, the farmer would lose his crop and/or animals and his fields would be out of action for at least an agricultural year as you cannot simply reseed or regrow crops whenever you wish and livestock could not be grazed on the land until it had been dried out. This could bankrupt the farmer. Any flooding from the reservoir would have minimal impact on the owner of it as the water would flow away from his land but all the risk, damage, financial loss etc would be borne by the residents, the farmer, users of the public highway and the council.

Additionally, with this volume of water so close to residential properties there is the risk of both ongoing groundwater and soil erosion which could cause unseen and unnoticed damage to the foundations of the White Cottages as well as the public highway. Furthermore, given the maintenance schedule of the reservoir, this is yet more noise and exposure to chemicals that the residents will have to put up with.

Although loss of value to a property is not a planning consideration, the planners will be aware that any property within 350m of a body of water has increased insurance costs or may become uninsurable with this reservoir being so close to White Cottages (and even closer to the public highway) has real consequences to the homeowners here. Our properties may be unsellable, uninsurable and unmortgageable leading to negative equity, bank repossessions and the residents being made homeless. This is not about a drop in value, it is in the residents losing their right to an undisturbed life and to enjoy our existing homes peacefully, and could potentially deprive us of our homes not due to a reason of public interest but due to the personal interest of one person.

I also have concerns regarding the vibrations during the construction phase but also from the polo activities. The constant vibrations will be a nuisance and coupled with the noise will lessen the enjoyment of being at home and I am concerned about how it will affect the structure of the residential properties particularly those that are Grade II and are more susceptible to damage and more expensive to repair.

In respect of the sewage facilities, this is sited on land abutting

Culham Lane close to the residential properties by the turning to Kentons Lane rather than away from the residential properties on a more suitable area. Again, it is always suggested that drainage fields are far away from residential properties and local infrastructure but this has been placed next to Upper Culham residents and next to the public highway. As the drainage field is placed next to Culham Lane in the event that there are any issues then it will drain on to the road and down the slope down Culham Lane and also into Kentons Lane. This is not fully treated water but will still have bacteria etc in it as will the land that abuts the public highway in the treatment field. What risk assessment has been done regarding this being washed into puddles that dogs and animals drink from on the lane or to children who may touch the grass and banks here, or passing horses that may graze here? The addition of this will create a health risk and this is magnified due to the siting. The risk is acknowledged in the application. The treatment plant and drainage field have been located downhill of the proposed buildings, in the corner of the field with the exercise track, in order to minimise risk to the users. The applicant acknowledges there is a risk to users ie himself and his employees and visitors but gives no thought to the risk it will cause to the existing residents, visitors, pets and wildlife through its proposed placement

As well as flooding of sewage contaminated water, there is the potential for additional smell issues with this placement of the sewage treatment and drainage field that will, again, affect the residents of Upper Culham. It will also introduce more noise as it is run with a fan, increasing the noise issues for residents

I also see that the drainage system is to be a Klargestor Biodisc BF. The manufacturer states this is to be for 50 people yet the application states that on at least a twice weekly basis there maybe 100 people on site. Is this sewage system suitable?

I cannot tell from the plans whether the drainage field is the required distance away from buildings which I understand is 15m. It is difficult to know if it is the requisite distance from Kentons Corner Cottage, which, oddly, appears to have been missed out of the plan showing the drainage field which then gives the impression that the nearest building is some considerable distance away. However, it is the cottage's distance from the drainage which will be important to understand so that the applicant can comply with building regs and with the unfortunate omission of the cottage from the plans this could influence the decision regarding the siting of this here. I also could not see that any percolation tests have been done to check the suitability of the soil and groundrock, with the percolation rate being based solely on an assumption not on factual basis nor can I see any information as to boreholes in this area and the level of groundwater here or soil type. These are also important to know in respect of the suitability of siting this here regardless of the other issues raised.

I also note that in the original plan the justification for putting the exercise track and practice area so close to the White Cottages was because this would be a quiet activity (which I disagree with in any event) but now this has changed to being an exercise and playing field (with there now being no stick and ball area) this means that far from the impact of visual amenity being lessened it has become

more intensive with a full playing pitch (which is likely also to be used for practice) which will now also be marked out, have

vertical elements of goalpost and is even more noise intensive. By claiming that the exercise of the horses is the only noise impact is not only untrue now that the field has been turned into a match pitch

immediately next to the White Cottages but also fails to include all the other noise elements that are outlined in this objection. In addition now that there is a polo field so close to the White Cottages as well as all the polo activities associated with this, The noise

will be unbearable and will destroy our current amenity and have a significant impact on our lives and make our houses unliveable in. I note that the application states that there will be tree planting along the perimeter to cut off any remaining visual amenity that the residents may have. There is no indication of what these may be and given that the types of trees that grow to the expected height in the expected time frame are Leylandii or similar species these will be out of keeping and detrimental both to the landscape and to the light in the cottages creating a dark, dingy and dank living environment.

The pavilion, being the size and material it is and the siting in the middle of the open plateau does not blend with the area. It is of the size of a small two bedroom bungalow and contains a large 'entertaining' area. There is of course precedent for a pavilion for sporting events as seen at Cockpole Green Cricket Pitch. It too offers shelter from sunny or inclement weather and has facilities for

changing and a WC. This is used by over 22 people plus supporters at each match without issue. It is substantially smaller in size and built of wood in the style of a stable block, which is in keeping with the rural nature of the area. There seems no reason to have a pavilion of the size and design as in this application for the stated personal polo playing that will take place here and where fewer people are in two polo teams compared to cricket teams .

When looking at where polo fields are placed (and irrigation lakes) I can find no other polo establishment where such things are as close to residential property as the applicant has proposed and contrary to the advice given that polo fields and practice areas and water bodies should be placed as far away from residential properties as possible. There seems to be no clear reason why the applicant would do the opposite and would place everything so close to residential properties when the area furthest away from dwellings has been left untouched. If the applicant wished to indulge in his love of polo while

considering the visual amenity, the noise and other nuisance issues for residents (some of whom have lived here for many decades), the conservation of natural form, the agricultural nature of the site etc, then a plan which included one pitch surrounded by the exercise track in the North-North East area close to the A4130 (the only area surprisingly currently left untouched in this application) would be

more suitable and away from Upper and Middle Culham. There could be a small wooden pavilion akin to a small stable block in keeping with the Green Belt, reduce the amount of agricultural land removed from the Farm and keep the equine use as incidental and non-commercial (see Young's Farm) and balance the amenity by reducing the nuisance issues, lessen construction and the health and other implications of that,

reduce the CO2 issues both during the building phase and on the day to day running, need fewer stables etc. Given the applicant's

concerns about biodiversity, limited planting of native English deciduous trees on specific small areas would lessen the visual changes and block the noise and dust during the polo season but allow the plateau to be shown in its natural state during the off season, so not fully changing the openness of the area whilst also benefitting nature. The irrigation lake could be in the central area or on the North/North West of the landholding which would allow for the applicant's own land to have the flooding risk, not the residents, the farmer, road users or the council and could be substantially smaller in size which would be far more environmentally friendly and lower risk.. The applicant states in his application his keenness to increase the biodiversity and there are many ways he could align his love of polo with his passion for nature with a landholding that remained agricultural with some incidental equine use. He could undertake sustainable farming initiatives as per government policy thus keeping the land in agricultural use and under agricultural classification. Instead he is introducing bricks and mortar, changing the openness, changing the planting, asphaltting and hardcoring over habitat and introducing an increase in emissions and noise and is likely to be using biocides more frequently than when the land was farmed. The scale of this application includes stabling for over 150 polo ponies. This is more stabling than even Guards Polo Club and is of the level found at corporate polo facilities which are run as a commercial enterprise with leased stables, hotels, bars, frequent tournaments and other hospitality and accommodation features (on far larger acreages and away from residential properties) with visitors often arriving by helicopter. More than that, by allowing permission for this, the residents of Upper Culham will find themselves in a polo sandwich with this and Park Place on either side and the associated noise, vibrations, smells, lights, insect and vermin activity on both sides of them. There is nothing in the application that demonstrates a sporting facility of the proposed size and layout is necessary, reasonable or proportionate for what the applicant has stated will be private use only.

The government's stated aim is to protect food security and not take arable land out of use unless for environmental project. This application is the antithesis of this policy - wildlife will be disturbed and will lose their habitat, shelter and feeding grounds, there will continue to be the spraying of biocides, the aggregate for the exercise area and internal roads will remove plants and other

flora and will produce dust, the roads throughout not only changes the rural nature but increases flooding risk via reduced groundwater soakaway.

Prior to determining the application, I would be grateful if the planners would consider asking the applicant for additional information and assessments to understand the full impact of this application. To this end, I ask the planners to consider the following:

Input from the Environmental Agency regarding the statutory duties (if any) of the applicant in regard to the reservoir

A full flood modelling report in regard to the proposed reservoir including whether it will cause any reclassification of the current flood zone, the extent of different levels of flooding including the outcome from floods in every direction due to water escaping from overtopping, or breach of the banks or through the chalk bedrock

with an analysis for all properties that could be affected (however small a chance), and the level of harm to human life (including residents, recreational users of area, vehicular traffic caught up in this), and the level of damage to properties within the flood zone and effect on the local infrastructure from any form of flooding and whether the applicant will have specific insurance for this and to what level of cover.

Whether Natural England should be advising on this application in regard to soil grade and reduction in high value farmland

A costs analysis in regard to insurance premiums for residents and for the council due to the reservoir being less than 350m from their properties and the public highway, the costs in regard to water egress both from catastrophic flood, minor flood and leakage through chalk substrata for in regard to road upkeep and repairs and for residential owners affected, and the likely diminution in value of the residential properties in Upper Culham and environs both in regard to the flooding risk and the nuisance from noise and traffic and activity associated with the application.

Details of whether there will be a water abstraction licence and how the reservoir is to be filled both initially and after maintenance etc and whether during times of drought the borehole is used (which could cause a change in soil structure leading to water egress) or the mains water supply which will remove water from the general public, create water shortages from the limited holding supply at Bowsey Hill.

Details of how the residents will be protected from noise and dust and other associated risks with the construction and the playing and practising of polo.

Details of what is going to take place once the site is built including how many horses will the applicant actually own himself, how many will be exercised per day, for how many hours and how many times will matches be played and for how many days and for how many hours and how many people will attend and whether this will be invitation only, paying viewers or free and open to all and any additional noise/structures needed ie tannoys, how chukkas will start/end.

Detailed traffic plan for the construction stage including how HGVs will be managed during this stage (the plans only discuss post-development and the ongoing day-to-day running of the establishment and how the lorries will be limited regarding delivery times and days) and a limit to the amount of works traffic on site at any one time and a limit to the days and times that these works can take place particularly in the early morning, evening and at weekends and an updated vehicle movement plan to include the additional maintenance vehicles.

Detailed report on how noxious substances and smells both during the development and during the polo usage will be mitigated.

Detailed health and safety report as to the effects on residents in regard to the environmental factors that will be faced by them in both the construction period and during the polo usage covering dust, allergens, noxious substances and smells, vermin, insect activity etc

A professional report on the likely noise nuisance and decibel levels to all residents both on a day to day level including staff movements, vehicle movements, noise from work with the horses etc

and the likely noise levels from the exercise area and both polo fields particularly in the event that matches are held for those in residential properties in Upper Culham, Kentons Lane, Ashley Hill Place and Cockpole Green, Middle Culham.

A noise assessment regarding the use of helicopters to access the site and a risk assessment on the use of helicopters and safety zones for residents and road users in the above areas plus on the A4130, An assessment of the risks of accidental injury or damage to residents and road users from errant polo balls, escaped horses and other

associated risks such as unexpected noise ie galloping horses, etc particularly to horseriders, cyclists and pedestrians.

Detailed report about vermin control including the use of poisons and the use of lead shot or pellets or bullets which could poison the protected red kites and other fauna in the area.

A report into the biocides that will be used, which types and on what areas and in what quantities and how often and by what delivery mechanism or vehicle.

An independent assessment for light loss for the residents of the White Cottages in regard to the screening solution set out in the application which would result in trees 10m high (higher than our first floor windows) and details of the trees that will be planted.

An independent report into the level of loss of visual amenity for residents

An independent BDG metric and confirmation as to the gain (or loss) of BNG.

Detailed report into the effect of the proposal on people with disabilities, the sick, the elderly, babies and children and those with health conditions that are debilitating but may not be disabilities, ie asthma and allergies etc both during the construction stage and the polo usage stage.

Detailed assessment in regard to lighting and preserving the dark skies and the likelihood of nuisance to neighbours with light pollution and the steps taken to ensure that this is prevented.

Detailed biodiversity and ecology report and its effect on the current flora and fauna as well as an analysis of habitat lost versus habitat gained and a statistical analysis of whether the proposal will benefit or harm the biodiversity and ecology of the area and the existing

flora and fauna and which species will benefit and which will be harmed.

An assessment as to the PM and other use of potentially carcinogenic materials and the effect on the local residents.