

PLANNING REF : 261059  
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 11 Huntley Way  
: Wokingham, Berkshire  
: RG40 4PU  
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Marco Arcangeli  
DATE SUBMITTED : 04/06/2026

COMMENTS:

I write as a local resident to formally object to this outline application by Crest Nicholson for up to 660 dwellings on 45 hectares of agricultural land at Barkham Square.

The adopted development plan does not support this proposal. The site is designated Countryside under Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy, which presumes against development outside settlement boundaries. The applicant's case rests almost entirely on draft Policy SS11 of the Local Plan Update, a document that remains unadopted and is still under examination. Granting permission on this basis would undermine the plan-making process and set a damaging precedent.

The site contains irreplaceable habitat that should rule out development of this kind. The applicant's own documents confirm Ancient Woodland along Barkham Brook and the southern boundary, alongside priority habitats including hedgerows, deciduous woodland and ponds, with Longmoor Bog SSSI in close proximity. The NPPF is clear that development causing the loss of Ancient Woodland should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, and none exist here. Claiming 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on a site containing Ancient Woodland is not credible mitigation for its permanent destruction. The site also falls within the 5km buffer zone of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. The proposed SANG of approximately 13 hectares has not been convincingly demonstrated, at this outline stage, to be sufficient to divert future residents away from the SPA. The risk of harm to a European protected designation cannot be accepted on the basis of what has been submitted.

Local infrastructure is already under serious strain and cannot absorb this level of growth. The application itself acknowledges that GP surgeries, dental practices and pharmacies serving this area are in Finchampstead, not Arborfield Green. The nearest secondary school is described as a 22-minute walk away, with no secondary provision proposed on site. The access routes, Langley Common Road and Commonfield Lane, are rural lanes that were never intended to carry the traffic 660 homes would generate. Wokingham Borough is already the lowest-funded unitary authority per resident in England, which makes the prospect of adequately funding the services this development demands even more unrealistic.

Beyond the local infrastructure question, the cumulative weight of development already committed across this borough is enormous. The Arborfield Green SDL already has thousands of homes approved or under construction, large phases of South Wokingham remain unbuilt, and the Loddon Valley Garden Village application proposes a further 3,930 homes. Approving 660 additional homes on an unallocated greenfield site, before the existing pipeline has been delivered, is premature and cannot be justified.

Finally, the site sits immediately adjacent to the Barkham Street Area of Special Character and close to several Grade II listed buildings including Barkham Square itself, Sparks Farmhouse and the Church of St James. A development of this scale would permanently alter the character and setting of these assets in a way that cannot be reversed.

For all of these reasons I urge the council to refuse this application.