

PLANNING REF : 260774
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Woodisde Cottage
: Basingstoke Road, Riseley Nr Reading, Berkshire
: RG7 1QS
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Matthew Upshall
DATE SUBMITTED : 10/05/2026

COMMENTS:

I object to planning application. The site comprises agricultural fields outside the defined settlement boundary of Riseley and is treated for planning policy purposes as countryside.

The application should be refused for the following reasons. In particular, Wokingham Borough Council has already objected to the nearby Dukes Field development because it would cause the loss of an important woodland buffer, fragment and isolate green infrastructure, harm landscape character, affect protected trees and wildlife

habitats, risk adverse impact on the Devil's Highway Roman Road, affect neighbouring amenity, leave uncertainty over woodland and tree management, and occupy an unsustainable location lacking services and amenities within walking distance. Those same objections arise on this application and, taken alone, provide sufficient planning grounds for refusal.

- Conflict with the development plan and countryside policies. The applicant's own planning statement accepts that the proposal does not pass the tests in Policy CP11 and that there is conflict with Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP6 and CP11. Riseley is a Limited Development Location, where Policy CP17 refers to sites generally not exceeding 25 dwellings, and the applicant accepts that this 44-dwelling scheme is above that threshold. This is not a modest rounding-off of the village; it is a substantial incursion into countryside.

- Overdevelopment of a sensitive village-edge site. The proposal would introduce up to 44 dwellings onto two agricultural fields which have remained in agricultural use since at least 1872. The site is enclosed by hedgerows and mature trees and sits between Bull Lane, Sun Lane and existing village-edge properties. The scale of development is excessive for this location and would materially alter the rural edge of Riseley.

- Wokingham Council's own Dukes Field objection applies here. Wokingham Borough Council objected to the Dukes Field development because it would lose an important woodland buffer, fragment and isolate green infrastructure, harm landscape character, affect TPO-protected trees and wildlife habitats, risk adverse impact on the Devil's Highway Roman Road, affect neighbouring amenity, leave uncertainty over woodland and tree management, and occupy an unsustainable location with a lack of services and amenities within walking distance. Those were not site-specific technicalities; they were principled planning objections to harmful village-edge development at Riseley. The same grounds arise here and should lead to the same outcome: refusal.

- Unacceptable erosion of the rural buffer and green infrastructure. The previous Dukes Field objection rightly objected to development

causing loss of woodland buffer, fragmentation of green infrastructure and harm to landscape character, and the same concern arises here. The site is bordered by ancient woodland to the north-west and priority deciduous woodland to the south-west, and the applicant's own material recognises that the site sits beside sensitive woodland and rural landscape features. The proposal would urbanise this village-edge landscape and weaken the green separation that currently helps define Riseley's rural setting.

- Landscape harm acknowledged by the applicant. The planning statement accepts that developing the site with housing would "inevitably"

change its contribution to the landscape and cause some harm by introducing built form onto pastoral land. It also accepts that the new access and widening of the Sun Lane/Basingstoke Road junction would erode rural character. Those harms are not minor technical matters; they go to the character of Sun Lane and the rural edge of the village.

- Unsustainable location and excessive reliance on private cars. The applicant accepts that Riseley has only basic facilities and that residents will need to travel further afield for many day-to-day needs. The applicant also accepts that the site's location makes it more reliant on the private car. The travel material shows that the nearest post office, GP surgery and primary school are well beyond comfortable walking distance, with Swallowfield Post Office approximately 2,610 metres away, Swallowfield Medical Practice approximately 2,680 metres away and Lambs Lane Primary School approximately 3,555 metres away. This repeats the unsustainable-location concern raised in the Dukes Field objection.

- Highway and pedestrian concerns. The proposal would generate an estimated 199 two-way vehicle movements per day, including around 25 two-way movements in each of the AM and PM peak hours. The proposed access depends on junction amendments at Sun Lane/Basingstoke Road and realignment of Sun Lane, with vegetation to be removed or cut back to achieve visibility splays. Sun Lane is described as a rural lane where pedestrians and cyclists share the carriageway, and there are no dedicated cycling routes in the immediate vicinity. This is not a robust sustainable transport solution for a 44-home estate.

- Heritage harm and insufficient certainty at outline stage. The site lies close to Grade II listed Pound House and Grade II listed Coldharbour Cottage, each approximately 10 metres from the application site. The applicant's heritage assessment concludes that the development would cause a minor negative change to the significance of Coldharbour Cottage and a negligible negative change to Pound House. The assessment also states that detailed designs are unavailable and that the heritage impacts may need to be reviewed once detailed designs are available. It is not acceptable to leave such matters to be resolved later where the harm to designated heritage assets arises from the principle and access arrangements.

- Archaeological risk, including the Devil's Highway Roman Road. The application site is immediately north of the Roman road connecting London to Silchester, known locally as the Devil's Highway. The heritage assessment identifies moderate archaeological potential because of the site's proximity to the Roman road, a possible Romano-British roadside settlement to the west and a known Iron Age

settlement to the south-east. The previous Dukes Field objection raised the potential adverse impact on the Devil's Highway Roman Road, and that concern applies with particular force here.

- Tree and woodland impacts remain unresolved. The arboricultural report identifies 33 trees, nine groups and two hedges, including one Category A tree and several Category B trees/groups. It records that T34 and T36 appear to be protected by Tree Preservation Orders. The report also accepts that the proposed highway works within the root protection area of T29 would cause direct root disturbance, loss of rooting area and a moderate adverse arboricultural impact that cannot be fully mitigated. That is a material constraint, not a detail to be brushed aside.

- Biodiversity impacts and premature reliance on future mitigation. The applicant's own biodiversity calculation shows an initial likely net loss of 8.98 habitat units, equivalent to a 59.54% loss, and a likely loss of 0.18 hedgerow units, equivalent to a 4.54% loss. The planning statement accepts that further habitat creation will be required to reach the 10% biodiversity net gain threshold. It also states that the metric will be updated at reserved matters stage and that measures may be provided on-site or off-site. The Council should not grant outline permission where the ecological balance depends on future, untested mitigation and possible off-site delivery.

- Protected species and ecological survey uncertainty. The applicant states that protected species surveys have been carried out or are programmed for the next available season, and that the full details are not known at this outline stage. It also relies on future LEMP, CEMP, bat boxes, dormouse nest boxes and a later bat-sensitive hting assessment. That is not a sufficiently certain basis for allowing major development beside ancient woodland, hedgerows and habitat corridors.

- Flooding, drainage and ground conditions concerns. The Groundsure material records a historical flood event on site in July 2007 from drainage/local drainage or surface water. It also records moderate groundwater flooding risk on site and within 50 metres. The Phase 1 geo-environmental report states that infiltration drainage may not be feasible and that intrusive ground investigation, monitoring wells, soakaway testing and further assessment are required. The drainage strategy is therefore insufficiently certain for a major housing scheme in this location.

- Outline nature of the application leaves too much unresolved. The application reserves layout, scale and appearance, while the submitted material repeatedly defers critical matters including detailed drainage, biodiversity net gain, ecological lighting, tree protection, services and detailed design. This is precisely the type of sensitive site where the Council should require certainty before granting permission, not after.

The planning benefits of housing and affordable housing do not overcome these site-specific harms. The proposal conflicts with the development plan, overdevelops a countryside site, harms landscape character and green infrastructure, raises unresolved heritage, archaeology, ecology, tree, drainage and highway concerns, and would place a car-dependent estate in a limited-service village location.

Wokingham Borough Council objected to the Dukes Field development for materially similar reasons, including harm to woodland buffer, green infrastructure, landscape character, trees, wildlife habitats, the Devil's Highway Roman Road, residential amenity, woodland management and sustainable access to services. Given those reasons alone, and for consistency with its own previous objection, the Council should refuse application 260774.