

PLANNING REF : 252595
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Adrian.Betteridge@wokingham.gov.uk
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SUBMITTED BY : Councillor Adrian Betteridge
DATE SUBMITTED : 12/01/2026

COMMENTS:

This objection is supplementary to my original request that the application is reported to Planning Committee on the basis of being inappropriate development in a countryside location and placing excessive burden on the congested Barkham Road

Previous applications for development on this site have been refused for a wide range of reasons. Most of these continue to apply to this new application. Whilst fewer dwellings are now proposed, additional development permissions nearby on top of the local plan more than nullify any benefit of this, on issues such as loss of countryside, urbanization, transport impact and general sustainability.

This application will be in addition to the recently approved development on School Road and the much larger developments at Arborfield SDL and proposed developments at Loddon Garden Village and Barkham Square which are strategically important in the Local Plan Update. The collective impact of all this development on the natural environment and on congestion on the roads is an important consideration for this proposal.

The application will place new dwellings and hard landscaping in an existing natural environment between Langley Common Road and Arborfield Cross. Local residents report on the value of this existing greenspace as a wildlife corridor and habitat. Whilst some greenspace will remain to the west of the proposed development, this will be constrained to the north by the approved development north of School Road. With the Local Plan Update driven development of Barkham Square there will be contiguous housing from Finchwood Park to the South all the way to Arborfield Cross. The remaining inter-settlement boundary will measure just 250m.

Residents also report drainage issues on the land which will be exacerbated by hard landscaping, and do not seem consistent with the statement on drainage in the application.

Existing development in the area is linear along established roads, whereas this proposal introduces another dimension, which is at odds with the existing character of the area.

The application argues that proximity to the Arborfield Green development makes it sustainable. Access to Arborfield Green is along Langley Common Road, a 40mph road with a narrow pavement on one side, or by car. Facilities in Arborfield Green were scaled to support the original 3,500 new dwellings. They are already expected to support a further 900 proposed in the local plan and more than 100 which have been added through additional approvals, with opportunities to improve facilities unknown. Additional development, unless it makes a significant contribution to this overall challenge, will not be sustainable.

The planning statement claims to be 750m from a GP surgery. This is factually incorrect, presumably a reference to the

NHS facility in Arborfield Village which has not been used since 2020. GP Surgeries are in fact many miles from the location and all are over-subscribed against NHS guidelines. The ability of this development to access sustainable water and sewage facilities is also unclear.

Vehicle traffic from the development would use Langley Common Road. Congestion on this road is already of significant concern, with queues from Barkham Street to past School Road in the morning peak, delaying journeys and making egress and entry to School Road difficult. This will become a bigger issue as the Arborfield SDL is built out and with proposed development at Barkham Square.

There are no simple solutions to this problem that would be within the scope of CIL or S106 from this small development.

The application refers to accessing bus stops on Langley Common Road, at a distance of 275m. The bus service along this road is a once weekly service. Accessing the more frequent Leopard 3 service requires a 900m walk along a narrow pavement 40mph road.

In summary, many of the reasons for rejection in 2017 remain valid. The impact of existing new development on the area and emerging local plan proposals highlight the importance of these concerns and introduce new reasons why this development cannot be considered sustainable. I am clear that the adverse impacts of this application significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, and believe that it should be rejected accordingly.