PLANNING REF : 260774
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Lyncot
: Lyncot Bull Lane Riseley, Reading
: RG7 1SE
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Stephen Mays
DATE SUBMITTED : 13/05/2026

COMMENTS:
I write as a resident of Riseley, Berkshire, to object formally to the above planning application. I live in the village and have a direct interest in the effect of this proposal on Riseley's character, countryside setting, local roads, neighbouring amenity,

heritage assets, ecology and drainage.
The application is described as an outline application with all matters reserved except access for the construction of up to 44 dwellings, including affordable housing, together with access, landscaping and associated infrastructure. The application is a

cross-boundary proposal submitted to Wokingham Borough Council and in parallel to Hart District Council, with the planning statement identifying both councils as the Local Planning Authorities for this application. The planning statement states that only approximately

0.03 hectares of the red line falls within Hart District, with all of the development parcel falling within Wokingham Borough, while the detailed access and highway works are located largely within Hart Dis trict. For that reason, I ask both Councils to treat this objection as applying to the development as a whole and to the access works in
particular.
For the reasons set out below, I respectfully ask that planning permission be refused.
1. The proposal is inappropriate development in the countryside

outside the settlement boundary
The application site is located outside the defined settlement boundary of Riseley and, for planning policy purposes in both Wokingham Borough and Hart District, is located within the

countryside. The site currently comprises agricultural fields / pastoral land rather than previously developed land. The proposal would therefore extend built development into open countryside on the south-western edge of the village.
The applicant's own planning statement recognises conflict with the

development plan. It states that Riseley is a "Limited Development Location" and that Core Strategy Policy CP17 envisages housing delivery in Limited Development Locations with sites generally not

exceeding 25 units, while also acknowledging that the present proposal is over that threshold. It further accepts that the proposal does not pass the criteria in points 1 to 7 of Core Strategy Policy CP11, which governs development outside settlement

limits, and
concludes that there is "some conflict" with CP11. The applicant also acknowledges some conflict with policies CP1, CP6 and CP11 in its
conclusion.

In my view, the scale of up to 44 dwellings is not a modest rounding-off of the village. It would represent a substantial

incursion into countryside, beyond the settlement boundary and above the scale normally contemplated for a limited development location. The fact that Wokingham Borough Council has a housing land supply shortfall does not remove the requirement to assess whether this

particular site is suitable, proportionate and consistent with the spatial strategy. The planning statement relies heavily on the tilted balance, but it also confirms that the scheme conflicts with countryside, sustainability and accessibility policies that remain

important to the proper planning of Riseley.
I also understand that previous proposals for residential development on this site, or on materially similar land in this immediate part of Riseley, have previously been rejected as

unsuitable. Nothing of substance has changed since those earlier decisions: the land remains outside the settlement boundary, within the countryside, dependent on the same limited village services and narrow rural lanes, and subject to the same landscape, ecological,

heritage and amenity
sensitivities. The Councils should therefore be slow to depart from the earlier conclusion that this is not a suitable location for residential development.
A recent and highly relevant Wokingham Borough Council adjoining

local authority consultation response to Hart District Council application 231443, concerning land east of Dukes Field Cottage, Norton Road, Riseley, reinforces the same point. In that objection, Wokingham
Borough Council objected to residential development in Riseley on grounds including the loss of an important woodland buffer, fragmentation and isolation of green infrastructure, detrimental impact on landscape character, significant loss of TPO-protected trees and associated impact on wildlife habitats, potential adverse

impact on the Devil's Highway Roman Road, potential overlooking of neighbouring dwellings, uncertainty over the management of retained woodland and trees, and the site being in an unsustainable location with a lack of services and amenities within walking distance. Those

are not remote or irrelevant concerns: they are directly analogous to the issues raised by the present application, and they support the
conclusion that residential development in this sensitive part of

Riseley would be unsuitable and should be refused.
2. Harm to the character and appearance of Riseley and its countryside setting
The application site is part of the rural edge of Riseley. The planning statement describes the site as two pastoral fields divided

by a mixed tree and hedgerow belt, enclosed by hedgerows, trees and informal field boundaries. The same statement identifies the site as falling within the Stanford End Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills Landscape Character Area and the Riseley Farmed Clay Lowland Landscape Character Area. Those landscape areas are described as

including rural lanes that are often narrow and lined with verges, ditches and mature trees, and, in the case of the Stanford End character area, as having an isolated and rural character.

The applicant itself accepts that development of the site with housing would "inevitably change" its landscape contribution by introducing built development on pastoral land. The planning statement also
accepts that the new access and the widening of the junction of Sun

Lane with Basingstoke Road would erode some of the rural character. It further concludes that the proposal would cause some harm to the landscape and some conflict with Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policies CC03 and TB21,

which seek to retain or enhance the condition, character and features contributing to landscape character.
This harm should not be dismissed as merely localised. Riseley's character is defined not only by its existing built form, but also by the way the village sits within a network of fields, hedgerows, mature trees, woodland edges and narrow rural lanes. The application site forms part of that transitional green land around the village and helps maintain the sense that Riseley is contained within, and

shaped by, its surrounding countryside. The proposal would urbanise the
south-western edge of the village, introduce a new estate road and junction works, and replace a pastoral field with built form and

associated infrastructure. It would also erode the green corridor created by the existing hedgerows, tree belt and surrounding vegetation, which presently helps connect the site with the adjoining land around Bull Lane, Sun Lane and the nearby woodland. Wokingham Borough Council's recent Dukes Field objection is significant because it treated the loss of a woodland buffer, fragmentation and isolation of green infrastructure, and detrimental impact on landscape character in Riseley as reasons to object to

residential development. The same landscape and green infrastructure concerns apply here. That would materially diminish the rural approach to the village from Sun Lane and Basingstoke Road and would conflict with the objectives of CP1, CP3, CC03 and TB21.

3. Unsustainable location and excessive reliance on the private car
The applicant's own documents show that Riseley has only a limited range of day-to-day facilities within walking distance. The planning statement identifies facilities in Riseley as a village hall with tea room and a public house, and notes that Swallowfield, around 1.6 km to the north, contains a wider range of services including a small shop and a medical practice. The planning statement accepts that most villagers are likely to need to travel elsewhere for

employment, higher-order facilities, secondary and post-16 education, larger convenience and comparison shopping, and leisure. The Travel Plan Statement confirms the limited nature of local facilities. It lists Riseley Memorial Hall and Tea Room at

approximately 510 metres, Wellington Farm Shop at approximately 705 metres, the Bull at Riseley public house at approximately 440 metres, and Riseley Tennis Club at approximately 570 metres from the

site
access. However, it also identifies Swallowfield Post Office and

Parish Stores at approximately 2,610 metres, Swallowfield Medical Practice at approximately 2,680 metres, and Lambs Lane Primary School at approximately 3,555 metres, with walking times of approximately 33, 34 and 44 minutes respectively. That is a poor

basis for a new
development of up to 44 dwellings, particularly for families, older residents or those without easy access to a car.
Public transport provision is also limited. The closest bus stops are identified as the Dog and Partridge stops on Basingstoke Road,

but the 145 service operates only on Tuesdays with one service across the day, while the 600 service is described as hourly between Reading, Mereoak Park & Ride, TVSP, Swallowfield and Riseley. The nearest ra il station is Reading, approximately 13.5 km by cycle from the site and approximately 42 minutes away by bicycle. The Travel Plan Statement therefore relies on a combination of walking, cycling, bus and rail options which, in practice, are unlikely to meet the everyday needs of many households without regular private

car use.
The applicant's planning statement expressly acknowledges that any development in or near Riseley would result in some reliance on private motorised transport because residents must travel further afield to access services not provided locally. It also acknowledges that the location of the site makes it more reliant on the private car. This concern is also consistent with Wokingham Borough Council's recent objection to the Dukes Field proposal, which

expressly
identified an unsustainable location with a lack of services and other amenities within walking distance as a reason for objection. In my view, that conflict should be given substantial weight, particularly given the scale of the proposal and the acknowledged

conflict with Core Strategy Policy CP6, which seeks development in locations offering transport choice and minimising travel distances.
4. Harm to the local highway network, Sun Lane and road safety
The access proposals are a central part of the application, not a

minor technical matter. The development proposes junction amendments to the existing Sun Lane / B3349 Basingstoke Road junction and the realignment of Sun Lane to provide a new access road with an adjacent footway into the site. The access road is proposed as a

5.5 metre carriageway with 10 metre junction radii. The existing Sun Lane would be tied into the new site access road by a new minor priority junction arrangement. The application also proposes works to extend the

existing driveway to Coldharbour Cottage so that it ties into the improved Sun Lane.
This is a significant intervention in a narrow rural lane and at a sensitive village-edge junction. The Travel Plan Statement itself describes Sun Lane as a rural lane currently accommodating shared

use by pedestrians and cyclists. It also confirms that there are no

dedicated cycling routes in the immediate vicinity of the site and that cyclists would generally share carriageway space with vehicles. Pedestrian and cycle safety therefore depends heavily on the

character and quietness of the existing lanes, which would be materially changed by the creation of a new estate access.
The Transport Statement figures summarised in the planning statement p redict 25 two-way vehicular movements in each of the AM and PM

network peak hours, equivalent to around one vehicle every two to three
minutes on average, and 199 two-way vehicle movements overall. Those additional movements would be concentrated on a rural lane and junction arrangement that is not designed as a modern residential

distributor road. The issue is not simply whether the highway network can absorb a theoretical number of trips; it is whether the resulting access arrangements would be safe, sympathetic and appropriate in this village-edge location.

Hart District Policy INF3 is identified by the applicant as requiring, among other matters, safe, suitable and convenient access for all users and no severe impact on the operation, safety or accessibility of the local or strategic highway networks. Wokingham Core Strategy Policy CP6 similarly requires development to mitigate adverse effects on the local and strategic transport network and not to cause highway problems or traffic-related environmental problems. In my view, the application fails to demonstrate that this scale of

development can be accommodated without harmful change to Sun Lane, unacceptable pressure on shared pedestrian and cycling routes, and adverse effects on the rural highway environment.
5. Adverse impact on neighbouring amenity and the living conditions

of existing residents
The proposed development would sit directly beside existing homes on Yeosfield, Basingstoke Road, Sun Lane and near Coldharbour Cottage and Pound House. Although the application is in outline, the

indicative layout places private rear gardens backing onto the private gardens of existing Basingstoke Road properties and introduces built
development into land which currently forms part of their rural outlo ok. The applicant accepts that the development would result in

a
change to the outlook from properties along Basingstoke Road and Yeosfield.
The lack of reserved matters detail makes this concern more serious, not less. The planning statement states that layout, scale, appearance and landscaping will be determined later if outline

permission is granted. Yet those matters are central to the effect on neighbouring residents, including overlooking, enclosure, lighting, noise, loss of tranquillity and the day-to-day experience

of living beside the site. It is premature to conclude that neighbouring amenity would be acceptable when the final layout, design, levels, lighting,
landscaping and construction impacts are not before the Councils.

The proposed access works would also affect existing residents closest to Sun Lane and Basingstoke Road. The applicant's own community letter recognised that Coldharbour Cottage and Woodmans Cottage would be more directly and indirectly impacted by the proposed access works. The Councils should give substantial weight

to the harm caused by placing a new estate access and associated traffic movements in close proximity to existing dwellings on a narrow rural lane.

6. Harm to heritage assets and their rural setting

The site is highly sensitive in heritage terms. The planning

statement identifies two nearby Grade II listed buildings, Pound House on the north-eastern boundary and Coldharbour Cottage on the southern side of Sun Lane. The Historic Environment Assessment confirms that Pound House is approximately 10 metres from the application site and is a

16th-century listed building. It also confirms that Coldharbour Cottage is approximately 10 metres from the application site and is a late-16th-century timber-framed cottage with a thatched roof.

The applicant's Historic Environment Assessment accepts that the application site forms part of the wider rural setting of Coldharbour Cottage and that it enables the significance of the cottage to be appreciated in its rural context. It further states that key views towards Coldharbour Cottage from the south would be altered by both the built development and, more specifically, by the provision of vehicular access from Sun Lane, including removal of part of the hedgerow along Sun Lane. The assessment concludes that the

development is anticipated to result in a minor negative change to the significance of Coldharbour Cottage through changes to its wider setting.

The assessment also acknowledges that the application site likely akes a minor contribution to the significance of Pound House as part of its historically rural village-edge setting. It concludes that the proposed development would result in a negligible negative change to the significance of Pound House through changes to its wider setting, although that may need to be reviewed once detailed

designs are available. This is an important qualification because the application is in outline and the final design is not yet fixed. The planning statement itself quotes NPPF paragraph 212, which requires great weight to be given to the conservation of designated

heritage assets, irrespective of whether harm is substantial or less than substantial. In my view, the identified harm to Coldharbour Cottage, the alteration of key rural views from Sun Lane, and the

residual uncertainty created by the outline nature of the application provide strong reasons to refuse permission.

7. Archaeological concerns and insufficient certainty at outline stage

The application site has archaeological sensitivity. The Historic

Environment Assessment states that the site lies immediately north of a Roman road connecting London to Silchester and that there is

moderate archaeological potential within the site due to its proximity to that important Roman road and its location between a possible Romano-British roadside settlement to the west and a known Iron Age settlement to the south-east. The assessment also identifies post-medieval ridge and furrow earthworks within the site which are likely to be impacted by development. Wokingham Borough Council's recent Dukes Field objection also identified potential adverse impact on the Devil's Highway Roman Road as a reason for objection, which reinforces the need for a precautionary approach to development fecting this historic landscape.

Policy TB25 is cited in the Historic Environment Assessment as requiring detailed assessment where development is likely to affect an area of high archaeological potential or an area likely to contain archaeological remains, with a presumption that appropriate measures should be taken to protect remains by preservation in situ where practical. The applicant proposes to deal with this through a precautionary approach secured by condition. Given the scale of ground disturbance across most of the site, including foundations, drainage, landscaping, access and services, I do not consider that deferring the issue is adequate. The Councils should require greater certainty before permission is granted, particularly where the assessment itself states that ground impacts are likely to occur across the majority of the site.

8. Ecological harm, loss of the wildlife corridor, biodiversity net gain uncertainty and ancient woodland constraints

The site includes pastoral fields, hedgerow boundaries and a central belt of trees. The planning statement states that the nearest designated site is Stanford End Mill and River Loddon SSSI, approximately 1.1 km from the site, and that the site lies within the 5 km buffer zone of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. The Shadow Habitat Regulations Assessment is said to conclude that the proposed development may lead to likely significant effects, alone or in combination, from recreational pressure on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, with SANG and SAMM contributions anticipated. That is a material ecological concern, not a mere administrative matter.

The applicant's biodiversity figures also raise concern. The planning statement states that the Biodiversity Impact Calculation identifies a 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 4.54%. It also states that the creation of 11.14 habitat units of other neutral grassland and 0.58 hedgerow units would be required to achieve the 10% net gain threshold and satisfy the trading rules. The planning statement then says the metric will be updated at reserved matters stage and that measures may be provided on site or off site. In my view, this level of uncertainty is unacceptable for a greenfield site on the rural edge of the village. The site should not be

treated as a blank or disposable parcel of land simply because compensatory
measures may later be offered elsewhere. Its present importance lies in the way the fields, hedgerows and central tree belt work together

with the surrounding land to form a continuous green corridor at the edge of Riseley. That corridor contributes to the movement, foraging and sheltering opportunities of wildlife and to the soft, undeveloped edge between the village and the countryside. Once

built over and suburbanised, that connective function would be materially weakened even if some landscaping were later introduced within the scheme. The recent Dukes Field objection is especially important on this issue because Wokingham Borough Council expressly

objected to the
fragmentation and isolation of green infrastructure and to the significant loss of TPO-protected trees and associated impact on wildlife habitats. The present application raises the same type of harm, but on a larger residential scheme, and the Councils should

not treat later mitigation, off-site biodiversity provision or reserved matters landscaping as a substitute for retaining the existing connected wildlife corridor.
The site also lies next to sensitive woodland. The planning

statement states that the site is immediately bordered by a parcel of ancient woodland to the north and a parcel of priority deciduous woodland to the south-west. The arboricultural report states that ancient woodland is an irreplaceable habitat and that the NPPF

stipulates a 15 metre buffer around designated ancient or semi-ancient woodland where
development should be avoided. The Phase 1 Geo-Environmental and Geotechnical Risk Assessment identifies the nearest designated ancient woodland as St Leger's Copse, approximately 7 metres to the

north-west of the site. The recent Dukes Field objection also raised uncertainty over how retained woodland and trees could be properly managed following development, which is a practical concern that

applies equally here given the proximity of sensitive woodland, hedgerows and retained tree features. These constraints should weigh heavily against allowing a new housing estate on this site. 9. Tree impacts and unresolved arboricultural constraints
The application site and its boundaries contain important tree and

hedge features. The arboricultural report surveyed 33 trees, nine groups and two hedges. It identifies one Category A tree, seven trees and three groups of Category B value, with the remaining

trees, groups and hedges mainly Category C or U. It also records that trees T34 and T36 appear to be protected by Tree Preservation Orders.
The principal arboricultural issue is the impact on T29, a Category B oak. The arboricultural report states that a new adoptable highway is proposed within T29's Root Protection Area. It further states that excavation and lowering of ground levels are required, that no-dig construction techniques cannot be used due to highway

adoption
requirements, and that excavation within the Root Protection Area is

therefore unavoidable. The report acknowledges that this would cause direct disturbance and loss of roots, a reduction in functional rooting area, and a residual arboricultural impact that cannot be fully mitigated through design. It concludes that the works would

give rise to a moderate adverse arboricultural impact and an increased risk to the future health and retention of T29.
This is a serious and unresolved constraint. The report states that detailed mitigation measures will be developed at reserved matters stage, including arboricultural supervision, tree protection and post-construction monitoring where appropriate. However, mitigation and monitoring do not remove the acknowledged direct root disturbance or the increased risk to a mature Category B oak. The

harm to trees and hedgerows is another reason why the proposed access arrangement is unsuitable.
10. Drainage, groundwater and environmental risks have not been olved with sufficient certainty
The applicant's drainage strategy depends on details to be fixed

later. The planning statement states that the indicative masterplan has space for drainage solutions and that surface water would be attenuated on site before being pumped to the western edge of the site and conveyed off site to the east towards an ordinary

watercourse adjacent to the Devil's Highway, which outfalls to Long River. It also states that final details for foul and surface water drainage would be determined at reserved matters stage.
The evidence shows that drainage is not a negligible issue. The

planning statement acknowledges that some sections of Sun Lane and Bull Lane are lower-lying and susceptible to flooding. The Groundsure material records a historical flood event on site in July 2007 from local drainage / surface water. It also records the

highest surface water flooding risk on site as a 1 in 1000 year event with depths between 0.3 metres and 1.0 metre, and a moderate groundwater flooding risk on site and within 50 metres. The Phase 1 Geo-Environmental and Geotechnical Risk Assessment states that groundwater seepages are anticipated at relatively shallow depths. The same Phase 1 report recommends intrusive ground investigation, soakaway testing, boreholes, groundwater monitoring wells, in-situ

testing, soil and groundwater laboratory testing, and a Tier 2 generic quantitative risk assessment before final recommendations are made. In my view, that demonstrates that material ground, groundwater and drainage issues remain unresolved. It is not

appropriate to grant outline permission for up to 44 dwellings on the basis that critical drainage and ground investigation details can be settled later.
11. Inadequate community engagement for a major village-edge development
The planning statement states that this is major development and

that there is an expectation in the Wokingham Statement of Community Involvement that there will be some engagement with the local

community. It also states that on 12 March the applicant sent letters to 37 homes by first-class post. At the time the planning

statement was written, no comments had been received.
For a proposal of this scale on the edge of a small village, a single letter exercise to 37 homes is not sufficient meaningful engagement. The application would affect the wider village

community, not only immediate neighbours. Residents use Sun Lane, Bull Lane, Basingstoke Road, local bus stops, walking routes and village facilities, and the development would affect the character and setting of Riseley as a
whole. The limited consultation undertaken by the applicant should be given little weight in support of the proposal.
I recognise that the proposal would provide housing, including affordable housing, and that the applicant relies on Wokingham Borough Council's current housing land supply position. However,

the benefits must be weighed against the site-specific harms. Those harms include development outside the settlement boundary in the countryside, conflict with CP11 and CP17, the fact that this site,

or materially similar land in this immediate part of Riseley, has previously been considered unsuitable for residential development, harm to landscape character, loss of transitional green land around the village,
severance and urbanisation of an existing wildlife corridor formed

by the site's hedgerows, tree belt and surrounding vegetation, fragmentation and isolation of green infrastructure, harm to wildlife habitats, uncertainty over the long-term management of retained trees and woodland, reliance on the private car, adverse

change to Sun Lane and the local highway environment, harm to the setting of listed buildings, archaeological risk including the proximity of the Devil's Highway Roman Road, biodiversity net gain uncertainty, impacts on ancient woodland and trees, and unresolved

drainage and ground
investigation matters. These are also the types of concerns that Wokingham Borough Council relied upon in its recent objection to residential development at Dukes Field in Riseley.
The applicant's own planning statement accepts that the proposal

conflicts with CP1, CP6 and CP11, that the site is more reliant on the private car, that development would cause visual impact, and that there would be countryside policy conflict. It also accepts that there would be some landscape harm and conflict with CP1, CP3,

CC03 and TB21. In my view, these harms are not outweighed by the claimed
benefits and are not capable of being made acceptable merely by ditions or by deferring key details to reserved matters.
For all of the reasons set out above, I respectfully request that

Wokingham Borough Council and Hart District Council refuse planning permission for this application.
I also ask that this objection be placed in full on the public planning file and taken into account in the determination of the

application. Please keep me informed of any amendments to the proposal, any officer recommendation, the date of any planning committee meeting at which the application will be considered, and the final decision. If officers are minded to recommend approval, I

respectfully request that the application be referred to planning committee for determination, and that members undertake a site visit so that they can properly appreciate the rural character of Sun Lane and the surrounding countryside, the relationship with neighbouring

homes, and the effect on nearby listed buildings