

PLANNING REF : 261695
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Tunis Road
:
: W127EZ
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Emma Jessop
DATE SUBMITTED : 01/09/2026

COMMENTS:

I am writing to object to this planning application as a friend of a Wokingham resident who has visited the area many times over the years. Through my frequent visits, I have come to know and appreciate Wokingham, its surrounding countryside and, in particular, the importance of the green spaces that separate its communities. I therefore have significant concerns about the proposed development and the precedent it could set.

My objections are based on the following grounds:

- The site is currently undeveloped countryside. It is an important open green space and should not be treated as an opportunity for incremental urban development.

- A previous proposal for development on this site was rejected in 2019 by the Planning Inspector. This previous decision is highly relevant and raises questions about what has materially changed to justify reconsidering development of this location.

- The proposal risks setting a precedent for further encroachment into Wokingham's green spaces. Once development is permitted on this site, it could make it increasingly difficult to resist further incremental development of the surrounding countryside.

- It would erode the important green gap between settlements. The open land between Wokingham and Finchampstead provides an important separation between communities and contributes to the character and identity of the area. Developing this site would reduce that separation and contribute to the gradual urbanisation of the countryside.

- The site is fundamentally unsuitable for the proposed use. The extent of mitigation required is itself an indication of the site's incompatibility with the surrounding residential environment. The proposed 3.5m acoustic fence and 6m ball netting would be positioned only around 6m from neighbouring residents' boundaries. These are substantial structures that would have a significant visual and environmental impact. Furthermore, I question how effective they would actually be in preventing noise disturbance, particularly to upper floors of neighbouring homes, as sound will inevitably travel over the fencing.

- The proposal would cause significant harm to residential amenity. A fundamental principle of planning is that development should be appropriate for its location. In this case, the proposed intensity of sporting activity is incompatible with the established residential surroundings. The need for such extensive acoustic mitigation appears to acknowledge the level of disturbance that would otherwise be created.

- The development would have a detrimental impact on the landscape and character of the area. Rather than enhancing the existing landscape, the proposal would introduce substantial man-made structures, fencing, netting and intensive human activity onto land that has provided habitat for wildlife for decades.

- The proposed layout appears overly intensive and raises safety

concerns. The arrangement of pitches seems designed to maximise sporting activity within a relatively constrained area, with insufficient consideration given to neighbouring properties. There is simply not enough land to accommodate the proposed level of activity safely and appropriately without significant impacts on surrounding residents.

- Neighbouring homes would be adversely affected by the proposed fencing and structures. The height and proximity of the acoustic fence and ball netting would create an overbearing presence immediately adjacent to residential properties, with potential loss of light, overshadowing and an unacceptable sense of enclosure.

- There is a genuine risk of balls entering neighbouring properties. This creates a realistic possibility of damage to property and would inevitably cause concern and anxiety for residents using their own gardens. Residents should not have to feel apprehensive about spending time in their gardens because of an adjacent sporting facility.
- The ecological impacts have not been adequately established. There appears to be insufficient information to properly assess the full ecological consequences of the development. The introduction of hard landscaping, intensive sporting activity and extensive ball netting would inevitably alter the existing habitat and could result in the loss of flora and fauna.

- Protected trees and hedgerows would be affected. The proposal involves the loss of protected trees and hedgerow, while construction of the substantial acoustic fencing also creates a potential risk of damage to the root systems of other protected trees. Furthermore, the proposal does not appear to provide adequate replacement planting to compensate for these losses.

- Flooding and drainage have not been adequately addressed. The site is known to flood on an annual basis. This raises obvious concerns about the long-term usability of the proposed pitches and, importantly, whether changes to the land and drainage could increase flood risk to neighbouring properties.

- The highway and traffic implications appear understated. The development would inevitably generate additional traffic along Finchampstead Road and could increase pressure for inappropriate parking on surrounding residential streets. These impacts need to be properly assessed rather than minimised.

- The need for the development has not been sufficiently demonstrated. The claimed wider value of the playing fields appears overstated. While the facilities may be desirable to the school, their remote location raises legitimate questions about how much genuine value they would provide as a wider community asset.

- The facilities appear primarily intended to serve the school. The suggestion that the playing fields would provide significant wider community benefit does not appear convincing. Their value to external users seems to have been emphasised principally as part of the planning case rather than reflecting a demonstrable and substantial community need.

Having visited Wokingham many times, I have seen first-hand the value of its open spaces and the distinctive character created by the balance between its built-up areas and surrounding countryside. This proposal would, in my view, undermine that balance and represent another step towards the creeping urbanisation of an important green field.

I therefore ask Wokingham Borough Council to refuse this planning application.