

PLANNING REF : 261059
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Oak Tree Cottage
: 1 Langley Common Road, Barkham
: RG40 4TU
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Natasha Moor
DATE SUBMITTED : 03/07/2026

COMMENTS:

I wish to formally object to the proposed residential development comprising housing, a school and a care home on the land immediately behind my property.

My family lives in a late nineteenth-century cottage which, together with several neighbouring properties, forms part of the historic character of this rural area. Our home is currently surrounded by agricultural land and enjoys an open, tranquil setting that has remained largely unchanged for generations. The proposed development would fundamentally alter the character of the landscape, resulting in irreversible harm to the rural environment, local wildlife, residential amenity and already overstretched infrastructure.

1. Loss of Landscape Character and Harm to the Historic Setting

The proposed development represents a substantial urban expansion into open countryside. The fields behind our property provide an important visual and physical separation between the existing settlement and the surrounding countryside.

Our road contains a number of historic properties dating back to the late 1800s, together with the historic St James's Church, all of which contribute significantly to the area's rural identity and heritage.

The development would replace open farmland with extensive housing, roads, lighting, a school and a care home, fundamentally changing the character of the area. The loss of uninterrupted countryside views

from our property and surrounding public spaces would have a significant adverse impact on the landscape and the setting of nearby historic buildings.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, protect valued landscapes and ensure developments are sympathetic to local character and history. This proposal fails to achieve these objectives.

Furthermore, Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, where applicable, require decision-makers to give special regard to preserving the setting of heritage assets. Even where buildings are not listed, the NPPF requires the significance and setting of historic environments to be properly considered.

2. Impact on Wildlife and Biodiversity

The fields surrounding our property support a diverse range of wildlife which regularly use both the fields and our garden. Species observed include:

- * Deer
- * Grass snakes
- * Otters
- * Frogs
- * Bats
- * Numerous bird species
- * Mice and other small mammals

These animals rely upon the existing farmland, hedgerows, ponds, drainage ditches and green corridors that would inevitably be disturbed or removed by development.

The introduction of hundreds of new residents, increased traffic, domestic pets, artificial lighting and construction activity will inevitably fragment habitats and reduce biodiversity. The cumulative impacts cannot be dismissed simply because mitigation measures are proposed.

The proposal should be carefully assessed against:

- * The Environment Act 2021, including the requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain.
- * Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, which places a duty on public authorities to conserve biodiversity.
- * The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which protects many native species and habitats.
- * The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, where protected species such as bats and otters may be affected.

The planning authority should require robust ecological surveys covering all seasons before determining the application, rather than relying upon limited ecological assessments.

3. Traffic and Highway Safety

This proposal will generate a significant increase in traffic from:

- * Residential properties
- * The proposed school
- * The care home
- * Service vehicles
- * Delivery vehicles
- * Construction traffic

Our local roads are rural in nature and were not designed to accommodate traffic on this scale.

The cumulative effect of this development, together with the adjacent development already under construction, will place unacceptable pressure on the highway network, particularly during school drop-off and collection times.

Construction traffic over a prolonged period will further increase congestion, noise, pollution and safety risks for pedestrians, cyclists and residents.

The NPPF requires developments to provide safe and suitable access

and states that development should only proceed where any residual cumulative transport impacts are not severe. Given the existing pressures on the road network, it is difficult to see how this requirement can be satisfied.

4. Existing Infrastructure is Already Under Significant Pressure

This application cannot be viewed in isolation.

It represents an extension to another substantial development currently under construction nearby. That development has already resulted in prolonged road closures lasting almost a year while major utility infrastructure has been installed.

Residents have experienced considerable disruption, delays and inconvenience.

The need for such extensive infrastructure works demonstrates that existing services are already under significant pressure.

The proposed additional development will inevitably place further demands upon:

- * Roads
- * Water supply
- * Drainage
- * Sewerage systems
- * Electricity infrastructure
- * Healthcare services
- * Local schools

- * Emergency services

The planning authority must be satisfied that sufficient infrastructure exists, or will be delivered in advance of occupation, rather than allowing development to outpace local capacity.

5. Loss of Residential Amenity

Our property currently enjoys a peaceful rural environment.

The proposed development would result in:

- * Continuous construction activity over several years
- * Noise pollution
- * Dust
- * Artificial lighting
- * Increased traffic
- * Loss of privacy
- * Significant visual intrusion

- * Permanent urbanisation of the surrounding landscape

The open countryside behind our home would be replaced by housing and associated infrastructure, permanently changing the nature of our home and the amenity enjoyed by residents.

6. Cumulative Impact

Perhaps most importantly, this proposal must be assessed cumulatively alongside the neighbouring development.

Residents are already experiencing major disruption from ongoing construction, utility works and road closures.

Adding another substantial development immediately adjacent will compound these impacts for many years and fundamentally transform what has historically been a quiet rural community.

The cumulative environmental, ecological and infrastructure impacts appear to have been underestimated.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, I respectfully request that the Local Planning Authority refuses this application.

The proposal would:

- * Cause significant harm to the rural character and appearance of the area.
- * Damage habitats used by a wide range of wildlife, including protected species.
- * Result in the loss of valued countryside views and landscape character.
- * Increase traffic on roads that are already under pressure. * Place unacceptable strain on local infrastructure.
- * Cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of existing residents. * Fail to properly account for the cumulative effects of adjacent development.