

[Your full name]
[Your address]
[Date]

Planning Department, South Oxfordshire District Council
Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon OX14 3JE
planning.admin@southandvale.gov.uk

Dear Sir or Madam,

RE: OBJECTION — Planning Application P26/S1042/O — Up to 60 dwellings, Land South of Bolney Lane and East of Reading Road, Lower Shiplake

I write to formally object to planning application P26/S1042/O for up to 60 dwellings on the Pony Field site at Bolney Lane, Lower Shiplake.

[One sentence: who you are and your connection — e.g. 'I live at [address], adjacent to the site / have lived in Lower Shiplake for X years / regularly walk Bolney Lane and the Pony Field.']

1. Conflict with the development plan

The applicant's own Planning Statement admits conflict with Local Plan Policies STRAT1, H1, H8 and H16 and SNP Policy V2. The site is unallocated greenfield outside the settlement boundary. Lower Shiplake has zero housing allocation yet has grown 55.7% since 2011. A Planning Inspector dismissed a near-identical scheme for 25 homes in Lower Shiplake in April 2026 (Appeal Ref: 6003006) on the same grounds, finding the tilted balance inapplicable because the Neighbourhood Plan has no housing allocations. The same applies here.

2. SODC's own Tree Officer has already protected this site

Tree Preservation Order 25S07 (5 November 2025) protects 51 mature Horse Chestnut trees along Bolney Lane — Groups G1 and G2 — specifically because of this development. The statutory notice cites 'possible residential development on the Pony Field' as the reason. SODC cannot consistently protect these trees against foreseeable damage and then approve that same development.

3. Unresolved chalk aquifer and groundwater risks

The site is in SPZ1 above the same Principal Chalk Aquifer as adjacent Thames Farm — where sinkholes halted construction in 2020, SODC refused groundworks in July 2025, and the EA formally objected. The applicant's own documents record 8 confirmed dissolution pipes (Envirocheck Report), a site area of 5.28ha in the Geotechnical Report executive summary (above the 5ha mandatory EIA screening threshold), and autumn-only groundwater monitoring acknowledged as not representing worst-case conditions. Heavy metals are also present. The Environment Agency has not responded. Outline permission should not be granted before independent hydrogeological assessment is complete.

[Personal experience of local flooding, drainage stress or water problems — add details and dates here.]

4. Sewage pump station and cumulative sewer loading

The proposed pumping station — 12m x 8m, only 20 metres from habitable rooms — is entirely undesignated and deferred. Thames Farm is adding its own pumped foul connection to the same Station Road sewer. No combined hydraulic assessment of the cumulative loading from both developments has been provided. The Oxford Rivers Project (UKCEH) documents frequent untreated sewage discharges in this Thames Water catchment.

5. Highway safety and village infrastructure

The applicant's speed survey recorded 85th percentile speeds of 40.7mph southbound near the proposed access, requiring motorway-standard visibility splays. The access is also too close to Bolney Lane junction and the existing accesses to The Beeches and Thames Farm Barns. The station car park is full by 7am weekdays. The village shop, post office and butcher have only 3–4 public parking spaces. The Northfield Ave / Station Rd / Mill Rd crossroads is already hazardous.

[Personal experience of traffic danger or parking problems on Reading Road or at the crossroads.]

6. Permanent destruction of Bolney Lane and the Chiltern Way

Bolney Lane is a Byway Open to All Traffic and part of the Chiltern Way. Currently unlit, unkerbed and flanked by 51 TPO-protected trees, it gives walkers a genuine rural transition from the Thames Path to the AONB. Development would require access works, lighting, traffic calming and estate signage —

permanently urbanising this rural gateway. A footpath through an estate is not the same as a path across open countryside.

[If you use Bolney Lane, the footpath across the Pony Field or the Chiltern Way — describe what you would lose.]

7. No plans, EIA question and strategic land concern

This is an outline application — there are no plans, no drainage design, no pump station details, no foundation assessment. The outline approach failed at Thames Farm at enormous cost. SODC should also confirm whether an EIA screening opinion has been requested: the applicant's own Geotechnical Report records the site as 5.28ha, above the mandatory 5ha threshold. Finally, Shiplake Parish Council's formal objection identifies SODC's own HEELA site SH723 (polo field frontage, same landowner) immediately to the north. This application should not be assessed in isolation from that wider land promotion.

[Optional — add any further personal points specific to your situation.]

For all the reasons above, I respectfully ask SODC to refuse this application. The harms to village character, the chalk aquifer, 51 protected trees, cumulative sewer infrastructure, highway safety, the rural landscape of Bolney Lane and the integrity of the Shiplake Neighbourhood Plan significantly and demonstrably outweigh the claimed benefits, contrary to NPPF paragraph 11(d)(ii). I also request that if officers are minded to recommend approval, this application be referred to the full Planning Committee rather than decided under delegated powers.

Yours faithfully,

[Your name]

[Your address]

[Date]