

PLANNING REF : 260439
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Redacted
: Finchampstead, Buckinghamshire
: RG40 4UN
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Redacted Redacted
DATE SUBMITTED : 18/04/2026

COMMENTS:

I write to formally object to the proposed development for the change of use of land to provide a gypsy/traveller pitch at land to the rear of 297 to 303 Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead.

1. Fundamental conflict with the plan-led system and policy framework

The proposal represents a clear and substantive departure from the established approach to development. The site is not allocated for development within the adopted Wokingham Borough Local Plan, the emerging Local Plan, nor the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan, all of which have been subject to extensive evidence gathering, sustainability appraisal, and public consultation. The application site lies outside defined settlement boundaries and is therefore located in an area where development is appropriately constrained. The absence of allocation reflects a deliberate and evidence-based strategic decision regarding spatial distribution. To permit development in this location would undermine the integrity of the development plan framework and conflict with national policy, which affords primacy to the plan-led system (National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites).

2. Unsustainable spatial positioning and functional isolation The locational characteristics of the site render it inherently unsustainable. It is functionally detached from essential services including education, healthcare, retail provision, and public transport infrastructure. This spatial disconnect necessitates a near-total reliance on private vehicular transport, conflicting directly with the sustainability objectives embedded within national and local planning policy. The proposal fails to demonstrate how it would contribute to sustainable patterns of development and instead reinforces car dependency (National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites).

3. Acute and evidenced highway safety deficiencies
The transport implications of the proposal give rise to significant concern. Range Road is a constrained, single-track rural lane lacking both the geometric capacity and infrastructure to safely accommodate increased vehicular movements. There is no segregated pedestrian provision, requiring pedestrians and cyclists to share the carriageway with vehicles, often without adequate passing space.

Of particular concern is the junction between Range Road and Nine Mile Ride, which is demonstrably hazardous due to restricted visibility and constrained manoeuvring space. This is not a theoretical risk; it is an experienced and recurring issue. On multiple occasions, I have personally encountered near-miss incidents at this and similar junctions, where limited sightlines and the speed of traffic on Nine Mile Ride create conditions in which safe entry and exit are

difficult to achieve. Vehicles are frequently required to edge into the carriageway or reverse, creating an inherently unsafe environment.

This aligns with historical planning precedent, including the refusal of application F/2006/8196, where highway safety at this junction was identified as a material reason for refusal. It is notable that traffic volumes have increased since that decision, further exacerbating the risk profile. The application fails to demonstrate that these long-standing and well-evidenced safety concerns can be adequately mitigated (National Planning Policy Framework - Promoting Sustainable Transport).

4. Loss of safe informal recreational space for children
Range Road currently functions as a relatively low-traffic rural lane, providing a safe environment for informal recreation. My young children, along with others in the area, regularly cycle along this road safely, without the need to use busier main roads or pavements. The introduction of additional traffic, including larger vehicles associated with this development, would materially alter this environment, introducing avoidable risk and effectively removing a valued and safe space for children's outdoor activity. This represents a broader social harm linked directly to the intensification of traffic on an already constrained route. I have personally been struck by a vehicle as a child whilst crossing by a road with limited visibility and I fully appreciate the gravity that these incidents have on developing adolescents.

5. Irreversible harm to landscape character and rural setting

The proposed development would result in a pronounced and irreversible transformation of the site's character. The introduction of built form, hardstanding, engineered access, and artificial illumination would fundamentally alter the prevailing rural typology, introducing suburbanising influences into an otherwise undeveloped landscape. This would erode the intrinsic qualities of tranquillity, openness, and visual coherence that define the area (Wokingham Borough Local Plan, Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan).

6. Ecological disruption and observed wildlife displacement The ecological implications of the proposal are both insufficiently assessed and potentially significant. The site and surrounding woodland support a diverse range of species, including deer, bats, birds, and other wildlife. There is already evidence of ecological disturbance in the locality. I have personally observed the displacement of deer from nearby woodland, including one instance where a deer was found deceased on a neighbouring property several days after apparent disturbance to its habitat. While anecdotal, such observations are indicative of the sensitivity of the local ecosystem and the tangible impact that land clearance and development activity can have.

The introduction of artificial lighting into a currently dark environment would further exacerbate ecological harm, particularly for nocturnal species such as bats and owls. The application fails to provide a robust ecological assessment or demonstrate compliance with biodiversity net gain requirements, representing a material deficiency (Environment Act 2021, DEFRA biodiversity net gain

framework, DEFRA MAGIC mapping).

7. Arboricultural impacts, land stability and occupant safety risk

The relationship between the proposed development and existing tree stock is inadequately addressed. Mature trees, including species commonly found in the area such as oak and pine, contribute to both ecological value and land stability. These species are also susceptible to limb drop or structural failure, particularly where root systems are disturbed. This creates a foreseeable safety risk to future occupants given the vulnerability of caravans and mobile homes.

The proposed 'no-dig' construction methodology is not credible when considered alongside the requirement to install utilities infrastructure, which will inevitably necessitate excavation within root protection areas. This introduces a fundamental contradiction and raises the likelihood of long-term tree decline, loss of canopy cover, and destabilisation of the ground (Forestry Commission guidance, DEFRA environmental principles).

8. Inadequate drainage strategy and flood vulnerability

The introduction of impermeable surfaces and potential removal of vegetation is likely to increase surface water runoff and alter the hydrological characteristics of the site. Given that caravans are classified as highly vulnerable development in flood risk terms, the absence of a robust and evidenced drainage strategy is particularly concerning. The application does not demonstrate that flood risk can be effectively mitigated (National Planning Policy Framework - Flood Risk and Coastal Change, Environment Agency guidance).

9. Procedural and enforcement considerations

There is credible concern that unauthorised works, including vegetation clearance and site alteration, have been undertaken in advance of formal permission. Additionally, there are indications that enforcement controls may apply in relation to the stationing of caravans on the land. These factors raise legitimate concerns regarding compliance and governance (Wokingham Borough Council enforcement framework).

10. Absence of essential infrastructure provision

The site does not appear to benefit from established connections to essential utilities including water, electricity, and sewage. The application fails to demonstrate a credible strategy for delivering this infrastructure without environmental harm or conflict with protected features.

11. Cumulative impact and precedent formation

While nominally limited to a single pitch, the proposal must be considered in the context of potential incremental intensification. Approval would establish a precedent for further similar applications along Range Road, leading to cumulative impacts including increased traffic, environmental degradation, and erosion of rural character (Wokingham Borough Local Plan evidence base).

In conclusion, the proposal constitutes unsustainable development in a location that is neither appropriate nor defensible within the prevailing policy framework. It fails to demonstrate safe access, introduces significant environmental and safety risks, and would

result in material harm to the character and ecological integrity of the area. The application is further undermined by deficiencies in infrastructure provision, unresolved drainage concerns, and the potential for cumulative impact. For these reasons, I strongly advocate for the refusal of this application.