

PLANNING REF : 260439
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Ramose
: Range Road, Wokingham, Berkshire
: RG40 3NR
SUBMITTED BY : Mr David Craddock
DATE SUBMITTED : 18/04/2026

COMMENTS:

Objection to planning application 260439

Up until October 2025 the land on which the development is proposed was a mix of deciduous woodland that varied from mature Oaks to sapling Silver Birches. The land would have been a haven for any number of animal species with deer frequently sighted there.

In October 2025 the land was cleared by mechanical digger with trees uprooted and piled untidily on the perimeters of the site. A habitat for wildlife was destroyed. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal states that "Aerial photography suggests that the felled area has likely comprised broadleaved woodland throughout most of the last 27 years, with a short period of clearance in 2013, therefore its ecological value has declined following clearance." The Ecological Appraisal also states that "The trees within the mixed woodland were of a range of ages with young growth and mature trees of a size sufficient to have potential bat roost features (PRFs). Furthermore, the site offers excellent foraging and commuting habitats for bats that may be roosting locally, especially given the proximity of nearby housing." The application does not demonstrate that the development does not harm protected species and habitats and species of principle importance.

The DEFRA Magic Map shows that much of what was cleared was Priority Habitat which is habitat of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity Listed Published by the Secretary of State under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. I do not believe the submitted information justifies the loss of the Priority Habitat and I consider this a reason to object to the proposal.

The site on which the development is proposed is also subject to a Tree Preservation Order (No. 1083/2005) which covers the entire development site. The order states that no person shall (a) cut down, top, lop uproot, wilfully damage or wilfully destroy; or (b) cause or permit the cutting down, topping, lopping, uprooting, wilful damage or wilful destruction of, any tree or comprised a group of trees or in woodland so specified. I do not believe that consent was provided by the authority for the works that were done and as such I consider this to be a breach of the TPO. I do not believe the submitted information justifies the breach of the TPO and I consider this a reason to object to the proposal.

The Arboricultural Impact Statement was prepared in January 2026, 3 months after the area planned for development was cleared almost entirely of trees. The statement says that the proposed scheme does not require the removal of any trees; therefore, the landscape

character of the site will be unaffected by the proposal. If the Aboricultural Impact Statement had been completed prior to October 2025 they would not have been able to draw the same conclusion. For this reason, I dispute the conclusion in the statement.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal which was completed after the site had been cleared states that "To meet the mandatory requirement of a minimum 10% net gain for biodiversity, offsite gains will need to be made by either purchasing units from a habitat bank or utilising land outside of the application site but under the applicant's ownership." The applicant's solution to this is to use the land within their control within the blue line of the site location plan in the first instance. I do not see how this can be achieved given that this is already mature/transitional woodland. I am not satisfied that the applicant is able to satisfy the 10% gain required.

The applicant has responded No to the question "Has there been any loss (or degradation) of an onsite habitat, resulting from activities carried out before the date the onsite pre-development biodiversity was calculated." I believe the response is incorrect as there was a loss of habitat in October 2025.

For the reasons above I do not believe the proposed development is in accordance with the Core Strategy Policy CP7: Biodiversity, CP3 (d) and MDD Policy TB23: Biodiversity and Development.

I do not believe the proposed development is in compliance with Policy CC03 of the Core Strategy Policy as the felling of the trees in October 2025 (which must be viewed in connection with the planning application as it has a material impact on many of the planning responses made by the applicant) was not in compliance with the need to protect and retain existing trees.

In the Assessment of Flood Risk there is reference to a Soakaway, but location is not referenced on the plan and as such it is difficult to determine how useful it will be. The aspect of the site means that any surface water will flow from the site and onto Range Road. Range Road itself has no drainage which means that the surface water will flow down and either into Silverstock Bog which is a Local Wildlife Site or onto the Sandhurst Road which currently suffers from frequent flooding which is a safety risk for drivers. Contaminated water from the site could therefore pollute the Silverstock Bog.

In light of the above it is concerning that there are no plans for Foul Sewage (in the application the means of disposal is unknown). There is no mains sewage on Range Road.

I believe therefore that the application does not do enough to satisfy CP1 as they do not sufficiently limit any adverse effects on water quality (including ground water), do not ensure the provision of adequate drainage and avoid increasing (and where possible reduce) risks of or from all forms of flooding (including from

groundwater).

I do not believe there to be any utilities to the site. The water main runs along Nine Mile Ride and the electricity comes up Range Road from the Sandhurst Road but only as far as Valois Farm. The lack of utilities to the site and the lack of facilities for recycling of water and waste to help reduce per capita water consumption or on-site renewable energy features (as set out in CP1) would suggest that the site is not sustainable.

The applicant has responded "No" to the question "Does the proposed development require any materials to be used externally?". Should this not be Yes given that there is a dayroom and fencing facing Range Road and adjoining properties in the plan?

In the proposal the amount of land covered by hard standing is excessive given that space is only required for two vehicle parking spaces and a touring caravan. The amount of hard standing could accommodate a far larger number of caravans or vehicles. This excess of hardstanding will result in additional run-off onto Range Road, a loss of biodiversity and is out of character with other properties in the area.

The Policy TB10: Traveller Sites of the MDD is relevant and has not been met as the application is not able to prove that:

a) The site is located in the Borough's existing settlements or is adjacent to an existing settlement either with or adjacent to the Borough;

The site is designated as countryside and outside the settlement boundary in the 2010 Wokingham Local Plan, the 2024 draft local plan and the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan. Whilst the site is adjacent to an existing settlement, the site itself is woodland and is distinct from the suburban gardens that it backs onto within the existing settlement. Approval of the application will encourage urban creep and further Gypsy/Traveller sites on Range Road ("the lane") (of which there is currently one also seeking planning permission 260577), significantly changing the character of the lane.

b) The site has access to a range of local services such as shops, health facilities including doctors, schools, and a range of amenities including play areas and other recreation facilities. The site is over 1km from local facilities which is not considered to be close and in effect the, the distances are unlikely to be covered other than by car. Range Road is an unmade road that is very muddy after periods of rain and this means that walking will be impractical and will only increase vehicle use on the lane.

c) Unacceptable impacts on the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape will be minimised through the sensitive and appropriate design of the scheme.

The application if viewed in conjunction with the illegal Gypsy/Traveller site (application 260577) on the opposite side of Range Road from this proposal will have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. The local landscape is largely woodland with four houses set back from Range Road. The clearance of the trees in October 2025 and lack of detail in the plan about how the impact will be minimised mean that this requirement is not met. The Gypsy/Traveller pitch would result in

a physical intrusion of development into this verdant woodland area. The presence of two caravans, one of which would be static, and ancillary outbuildings together with the trappings of residential paraphernalia would be substantially out of place in the woodland setting. From Range Road the change to the appearance of the area would be very noticeable and this would be significantly harmful to the present appearance of the area. This would be contrary to the provisions of Core Strategy Policy CP3(a).

If both applications for Gypsy/Traveller sites (this and the illegally occupied site opposite) were to be approved then they would equate to 50% of the current dwellings on Range Road. I consider this to be disproportionate to the scale of the existing settlement and so contrary to the requirements of Core Strategy Policy CP2(d)(i)

The application makes no reference to the impact of additional traffic on Range Road and adjoining roads. The proposal would generate additional traffic on Range Road which is substandard in respect of width (circa 2.8m wide) and construction (it is unpaved, uneven and muddy after rain). In March 2026 the residents of the illegal Gypsy/Traveller site opposite this proposal took it on themselves to widen the road between the site and Nine Mile Ride*. The material removed was piled high onto the remaining verges creating an eyesore but also making the verges inaccessible for all but the most sure footed. Range Road is well used by dog walkers, runners and cyclists, additional traffic combined with the lack of refuge at the sides of the road due to the illegal widening of the road mean that the risk of accidents to road users will be increased. As such the development is contrary to policies in Core Strategy Policy CP6 - Managing Travel Demand.

*the widening was done to allow access to Range Road for their caravans.

The proposal would generate additional traffic on the substandard road junction of Range Road with B3430 Nine Mile Ride which would adversely affect road safety and the flow of traffic. When exiting Range Road the junction has very poor visibility of traffic from the right. I would estimate visibility of less than 30 metres from the right which is significantly less than the minimum forward visibility that would be required for a new road junction on a 30mph road. This combined with a sloping aspect up onto the B3430 and high prevalence of speeding makes the junction high risk and unsuitable for use by caravans. As such the development is contrary to policies in Core Strategy Policy CP6 - Managing Travel Demand.

As noted above, Range Road is typically 2.8m wide (with the exception of where it was illegally widened) and has a number of mature trees on its verges. With a typical static caravan being 4m or more wide, I consider Range Road to be unsuitable for bringing such large units onto the site. This was demonstrated when the inhabitants of the illegal site opposite this application tried and failed to bring a static caravan onto their site. I am also concerned that further widening of Range Road would be required to get a static caravan of the size proposed onto Range Road from the B3430 and then from Range

Road onto the site without further widening of Range Road, damage to the verges and removal of trees.

The stretch of Range Road between the B3430 and the site is single track and has no passing places. For Vehicles entering Range Road from the B3430 from the east have limited visibility of any vehicles coming up Range Road to the junction until they are on Range Road. This means that one of the vehicles will need to reverse on a narrow and substandard road (possibly with a touring caravan). This increases the risk of accident for all road users. As such I consider the location is unsuitable for such large static caravans and is not in compliance with in Core Strategy Policy CP6 - Managing Travel Demand.

CP1 states that plans should "demonstrate how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel, particularly by private car in line with CP6". By the increasing the risk to more vulnerable road users such as horse riders, cyclists and walkers, the current application will only increase the need for travel by private car rather than seeking to reduce it.

I have concerns that the Application does not attempt to clarify how many people will live on the site. The area covered in hardcore could easily accommodate more caravans than is set out in the plans. The application does not set out how many bedrooms there will be and whilst the plan is for a single touring caravan, once there is a residential user of the site, having more touring caravans on the site would amount to permitted development.

Core Strategy Policy CP9 seeks to manage growth in the borough to achieve sustainable development and the strategy includes allowing development within the development limits of Finchampstead. The site lies outside of the defined village boundary of Finchampstead and in an area recognised as countryside.

Policy CP11 of the CS also applies in these circumstances and it advocates a general presumption against development except in a few exceptional cases which does not explicitly include gypsy and traveller sites. The requirements of CP11 are not met in any way by the proposal.

In conclusion, the planned development should be rejected for a number of reasons which are:

The site is designated countryside and the requirements for development of such a site have not been met.

The site is not sustainable with no access to utilities and only accessible by a motor vehicle via a substandard road.

The development of the site will damage wildlife and not generate a net biodiversity gain.

There will be loss of amenity and increase in danger to the users of Range Road.