

PLANNING REF : 260439
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Nine Mile Ride
:
: RG40 3NL
SUBMITTED BY : Mr W Frewin
DATE SUBMITTED : 19/04/2026

COMMENTS:

Objection to Planning Application 260439

****Application:**** Full application for the change of use of land to provide one gypsy/traveller pitch, including the stationing of a mobile home and touring caravan, erection of a day room, formation of a new vehicular access and associated parking, landscaping and ancillary works.

****Site:**** Range Road, Finchampstead, Wokingham

I write as a neighbour to object to the above application. The objection is made on the following material planning grounds.

1. Conflict with the statutory development plan

The application site lies outside any defined settlement boundary and is designated as countryside in each of the following documents:

- The adopted Wokingham Borough Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2010);
 - The emerging Wokingham Local Plan Update (2024 consultation draft);
- and
- The made Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The site is not allocated for any form of development, including traveller accommodation, in any of the above. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the application to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. No such considerations are identified in the submitted documents that would outweigh the clear conflict with the plan.

2. Conflict with national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS, December 2024)

Paragraph 26 of the PPTS (2024) requires local planning authorities to "very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan." The application site is:

- Located in countryside;
- Detached from any existing settlement; and
- Not allocated for traveller or other development in the development plan.

The proposal therefore falls within the category of development that national policy directs the Council to strictly limit.

Paragraph 27 of the PPTS further directs authorities to attach weight to the effective use of previously developed, untidy or derelict land. The application site is a greenfield wooded site and does not meet this criterion.

3. Unsustainable location

The site does not meet the sustainability tests set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the PPTS:

- There are no shops, schools, GP surgeries, or other day-to-day services within walking distance of the site.
- Range Road has no footway or paved surface, and there is no safe pedestrian route from the site to any settlement or service.
- There is no cycle infrastructure connecting the site to nearby settlements.
- There is no accessible public transport service on this section of Range Road.

The proposal would therefore result in a development wholly dependent on private vehicle use for all daily activities. This conflicts with:

- NPPF Chapter 9 (Promoting sustainable transport), which requires significant development to be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable;
- PPTS Policy B, which requires traveller sites to have reasonable access to local services and facilities; and
- Policies in the adopted and emerging Wokingham local plans directing development to sustainable locations.

4. Highway safety

A previous application on this site was refused on highway safety grounds. The stated reasons for refusal included:

- Increased use of the substandard road junction of Range Road with the B3430 Nine Mile Ride, which would adversely affect road safety and the flow of traffic;
- Additional traffic generated on Range Road, which is substandard in terms of width and construction, resulting in an increased risk of accidents to road users.

The current proposal does not address either of these refusal reasons. The Range Road / Nine Mile Ride junction is unchanged, and Range Road itself remains a single-track, unsurfaced road without passing places. Works undertaken by a user of Range to widen the carriageway demonstrate that the existing road is inadequate to accommodate the vehicle types associated with the proposed use; the fact that a caravan could not be brought onto the site following those works provides further evidence of the road's unsuitability for the vehicle movements the development would generate, including delivery, service and emergency vehicles.

The previous refusal reasons are material considerations. The

circumstances that gave rise to them have not changed.

5. Harm to rural character

Range Road forms an undeveloped area between established routes through the wider forest landscape, including Nine Mile Ride and Sandhurst Road, and is recognised as part of a green gap in the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan. The proposal would result in demonstrable harm to the character of the area through:

- The loss of trees already undertaken on the site;
- The introduction of a mobile home, touring caravan and day room, representing built form within a currently undeveloped stretch of countryside;
- The introduction of hardstanding and a new vehicular access onto the road frontage;
- The introduction of external lighting and associated vehicle movements into an area where neither is currently present, including at night;
- The cumulative urbanising effect on a rural road where no comparable development exists.

This conflicts with adopted and emerging local plan policies requiring development to respect the character of the surrounding area and the street scene, and with neighbourhood plan policies protecting the green gap.

6. Drainage and utilities

The site is not served by mains drainage, mains sewerage, or mains utilities. The submitted application does not adequately demonstrate:

- How foul drainage will be managed without harm to groundwater or surface water quality;
- How the introduction of hardstanding will affect surface water runoff, and what mitigation measures are proposed; or
- How utility provision will be achieved without further disturbance to the rural setting.

In the absence of this information, the Council cannot be satisfied that the proposal accords with NPPF Chapter 14 (meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change) or Chapter 15 (conserving and enhancing the natural environment).

7. Biodiversity and the natural environment

The site comprises wooded countryside. The proposal entails the loss of trees (in part already undertaken), the introduction of hardstanding over currently permeable and vegetated ground, and the loss of woodland habitat. The application should demonstrate compliance with the statutory biodiversity net gain requirement and with NPPF Chapter 15. The combined effects of hardstanding, domestic activity, external lighting and vehicle movements would result in a material adverse effect on the ecological value of the site and the surrounding woodland.

8. Availability of more suitable sites

To the extent that there is an identified need for additional traveller pitches within the borough, PTS paragraph 27 directs authorities to attach weight to the use of previously developed, untidy or derelict land. Other locations within the borough are better served by infrastructure, closer to services, and have safer highway access. Identified need should be addressed through the plan-making process and the allocation of suitable sites, rather than through the grant of permission on an unallocated, unsustainable countryside site.

Conclusion

The proposal conflicts with the statutory development plan and with national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites. The highway safety reasons for the previous refusal of development on this site remain unaddressed. The development would cause material harm to highway safety, rural character, the designated green gap, biodiversity, and sustainable transport objectives. The material considerations in favour of the application do not outweigh this harm. This application should be refused.