

Planning Statement

May 2026

**Applicant:**

Mr S Doherty

Address:

Land at Duck Egg Farm,
Highfield Park,
Wokingham,
Berkshire,
RG2 9PP

Proposal:

The change of use of the land, to a residential caravan site consisting of 3 pitches, each comprising 1 Static caravan, 1 touring caravan, 1 day room, 2 vehicle parking spaces, bike and refuse storage, amenity area, boundary fencing and associated infrastructure, to be occupied by Gypsies and Travellers.



Planning Documents

Document Name	Ref
Planning Statement	PD1
Location Plan	PD2
Proposed Block Plan	PD3
Refuse Plan	PD4
Ebike Storage and Charging	PD5
Bike Storage Plan	PD6
Built Form Calculation Plan	PD7
Land Contamination Report and Test Results	PD8
Enviromental Impact Assessment	PD9
Preliminary Ecological assessment	PD9
Bio Diversity Net Gain Report	PD11
Bio Diversity Net Gain Metric	PD12
Planning History Files - Merged	PD13
Day Room Plan	PD14
CIL Form 1	PD15
Communnitty Involvement Statement	PD16
Landscaping Statement	PD17
Judical Case - Chapman	PD18
Judicial Case - Waverley	PD19
WBC G & T - Topic Paper 5 Year Supply Position	PD20
Sustainability Appeal Decisions	PD21
Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment Area J2	PD22
Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment Area L2	PD23
WBC GTAA 2023	PD24

Site Description



The application site is located south of Observer Way (A327) and west of Eversely Road, situated in countryside beyond the settlement boundary, but being closely related to the settlement of Arborfield Green to the east, as can be seen in the image above.

The village of Arborfield Cross is located 1.02km to the north whilst Wokingham is circa 4.14km by road to the north east.

The red line application site is land adjacent to an existing and consented Gypsy and Traveller site, the planning history for which is set out in the relevant section.

The Chilterns National Landscape is located 12.6km north west, as the crow flies at its nearest point, and is not considered to be a relevant or material planning consideration.

The nearest SPA is 2.69km south of the site, measured as the crow flies.

The nearest SSSI is California Country Park, 1.64km as the crow flies, east of the site.

There are no article 4 directions, tree preservation orders, no ancient woodlands, no risks from flooding, and the site is not located within the Green Belt or a sensitive Footnote 7 landscape.

There are no known heritage constraints which affect the application proposal.

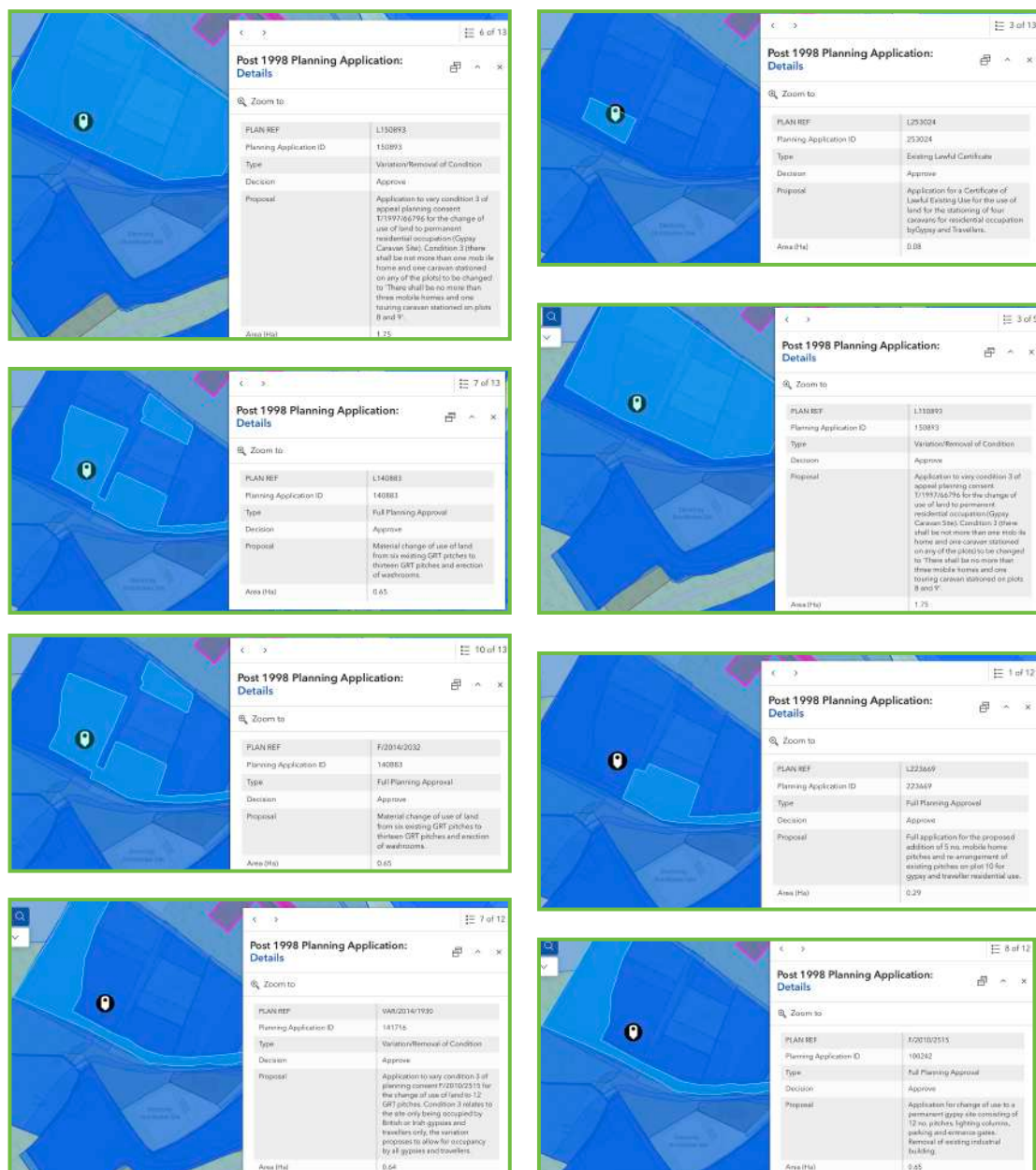
Planning History Document Submission Ref: PD13

252576 - Full application for the proposed change of use of the Land for the standing of 3no. static caravans for human habitation plus ancillary works.

Disposed of

The applicants previously instructed a planning agent to represent their interests and submitted the above planning application. The LPA disposed of the application post validation, following a request for amendments and additional information remaining unanswered. This submission seeks to provide that information as well as putting forward a comprehensive submission document in support.

Adjacent Consents



There appears to be a consent for 43 permanent mobile homes/static caravans, adjacent to the site

Applicant Occupants

The applicant family are well known local family from the Irish Traveller community who have well established and longstanding ties with the area and whose relatives presently live on the neighbouring land.

I am able to confirm that they are all Gypsies or Travellers as defined within the Annexe 1 of the 2024 PPTS.

PPTS Annexe 1

1. For the purposes of this planning policy “gypsies and travellers” means:
Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

This follows the High Court ruling in the judgement of the Lisa Smith Case No: CA-2021-001741 (Judgement submitted in full), this will be discussed further later in this document.

Personal Circumstances

At this stage of the application process it is not considered necessary to submit personal details in order to support a case of Very Special Circumstances in order to obtain planning consent within the planning balance.

That having been said, should the planning officer during their consideration of the file, deem it necessary and relevant to consider personal circumstances for a VSC case, then we would happily provide them to tilt the balance.

Alternative & Available Pitches

The applicants confirm that they have been unable to find alternative or available pitches, or for that matter, any land with greater or better potential than the application site.

In the event that the application is refused, then a roadside existence is the only alternative open to the applicant family members.

Waverley Borough Council Judgement Document Ref: PD19

I submit the full Judgement by the High Court Judge (former Planning Inspector) Karen Ridge Ref: QB: 2021-002721

She looked closely at the point regarding an oversupply of sites compared to GTAA numbers, at alternative consented sites and discussed them in her Judgement at Para 41 & Para 92-95.

41. The difficulties in obtaining a permanent pitch are set out by various defendants and I accept that is a particular difficulty of the Gypsy and Traveller community generally. Some defendants have contested the claimant's suggestion that pitches on the Lydia Park sites may be available. I understand these to be private sites, in the hands of individuals and it is to be expected that those individuals would want to keep any empty pitches for use by their own families. I conclude that it is unlikely that private pitches held by other unconnected individuals would be available to any of the defendants as alternative sites. That conclusion is one which Inspector Gilbert came to in the appeal at Stovolds Hill in August 2022, when dismissing the appeal, she concluded that this lack of suitable and alternative sites attracted significant weight.

92. The question of the availability of alternatives was raised by both parties. There are no available council pitches. The claimant suggests that sufficient provision of sites has been made and that there are spare pitches on Lydia Park. I accept that empty pitches on Lydia Park are in the hands of private individuals who will seek to cater for their own families. That was also the conclusion of Inspector Gilbert.

93. It is also instructive that the council officer, in refusing planning permission on the land did so on the basis that the Council could demonstrate a 5-year supply of pitches and that "the large number of pitches recently granted at Lydia Park itself, which gives the applicants options for alternative accommodation". This again points to the mindset of the local authority throughout their decision-making processes, they believed the defendants had somewhere else to go and a precarious roadside existence was not likely in the event of a final injunction.

94. Mr Beglan suggests that the onus of proof on the non-availability of alternative sites rests with the defendants. It is difficult of course to prove a negative. Other than the empty pitches on Lydia Park, the claimants are unable to point to any other available pitches. Some of the defendants have made enquiries of the claimant regarding the availability of pitches but to no avail. The defendants initially on the site moved off but subsequently moved back on to the Land when other options and the goodwill of family members and friends had been exhausted. I conclude that there are no other alternative sites available to these defendants in the event that they were required to leave the Land.

95. A roadside existence for these families, with all of its attendant difficulties would be the most likely consequence of final injunctive relief. That would lead to significant hardship for these families given their particular circumstances and healthcare needs.

This passage from the Judicial judgement as submitted, should serve to guide Council planning officers and appeal inspectors when considering GTAA unmet needs or consented sites that meet the need more accurately as taken by the Judiciary.

It is clear that the Judge understands quite rightly, that just because a site has been passed elsewhere, it does not mean that it is available or that there is no longer a need for the applicants to have a home and that roadside living would not be required.

Chapman v United Kingdom Document Ref: PD18

I submit the judgement in Chapman V United Kingdom 2001 Alternative Sites Must Be *Practical* and *Realistic*

The Court said that it wasn't just about whether **any sites exist**—it's about whether they're actually **available**, **suitable**, and **accessible** to the person involved.

"The availability of alternative accommodation is relevant to assessing the proportionality of the interference with Article 8 rights."

So if no **real** alternatives are available, forcing someone to leave may be **disproportionate** and unjustified.

European Court Human Rights

Article 8

Right to Private and Family Life - protects a traveller's way of life including their right to live in a mobile home or caravan and it follows that Authorities must consider the best interests of the Children in housing and family decisions

Article 14

Prohibition of Discrimination - Prevents discrimination based on ethnicity, lifestyle or age

Article 2

Right to Education - The children wish to access school and this article protects access to education

Article 3

Rights of Child - The CRC (ratified by all EU member states) defines the "best interests of the child" in **Article 3**, stating:

"In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities, or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration."

This applies to:

- **Family Law:** Custody disputes, adoption, foster care.
- **Education:** Equal access, non-discrimination (e.g., Roma children's schooling rights).
- **Health & Welfare:** Access to healthcare, protection from neglect.
- **Immigration & Asylum:** Unaccompanied minors must receive special protection.

A Child cannot and must not be blamed or held to account for the actions or conduct of a parent and their rights should not be infringed as a result of the actions of their parents.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

1. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied¹. It provides a framework within which locally- prepared plans can provide for housing and other development in a sustainable manner. Preparing and maintaining up-to-date plans should be seen as a priority in meeting this objective.
2. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan², unless material considerations indicate otherwise³. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.
3. The Framework should be read as a whole (including its footnotes and annexes). General references to planning policies in the Framework should be applied in a way that is appropriate to the type of plan being produced, taking into account policy on plan-making in chapter 3.
4. The Framework should be read in conjunction with the Government's planning policy for traveller sites, and its planning policy for waste. When preparing plans or making decisions on applications for these types of development, regard should also be had to the policies in this Framework, where relevant.

Achieving Sustainable Development

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- a) **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- b) **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- c) **an environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

And the NPPF goes on to set out at Para 10, that

10. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development** (para 11)

Para 11(d) is engaged where a LPA are unable to demonstrate an up to date 5 year supply of deliverable sites (PPTS Section 28)

I shall explore the Councils 5 year position later in this document.

The presumption in favour of sustainable development

11. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For **plan-making** this means that:

- a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;
- b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas⁶, unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area⁷; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

For **decision-taking** this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date⁸, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance⁷ provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination⁹.

Decision Making

39. Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible

The Government's direction of travel on wishing to bring forward development is echoed in both the PPTS and NPPF where they clearly introduce specific guidance and direction in relation to using planning conditions to bring forward otherwise unacceptable development.

Planning conditions and obligations

56. Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition.
57. Planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. Agreeing conditions early making. Conditions that are required to be discharged before development commences should be avoided, unless there is a clear justification.

NB Para 28 of the PPTS is of note.

The desire for new housing to meet everyone's needs and the importance that Government attaches to this, is set out at Chapter 5, para 61 onwards of the NPPF;

Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

61. To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. The overall aim should be to meet an area's identified housing need, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.
62. To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning practice guidance. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for

In regard to Rural Homes or countryside locations for new development, the Government attach importance to bringing forward development on previously developed land, and where it will provide homes to meet a specific need and where it can support a village to thrive.

Rural housing

82. In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs, including proposals for community- led development for housing. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.
83. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.
84. Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:
- a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;
 - b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;
 - c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;
 - d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building; or
 - e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:
 - i. is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and
 - ii. would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

It is clear that homes in the countryside are acceptable and not excluded, by the use of the words “should avoid”, and the clear guidance within 84, a through e gives us general principle that makes such homes acceptable.

The specific characteristics of the individual site are relevant in the planning judgement and balance.

In Chapter 8, (promoting healthy and safe communities) the Government are clear in setting out that they see a benefit to society in bringing persons together that would not ordinarily interact, this can be of great significance in forging cohesion between the traveller and settled community, and the significant benefits it can bring society;

8. Promoting healthy and safe communities

96. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:
- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;

- b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and
- c) enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

In Chapter 9, the Government look at the promotion of sustainable transport, which is often a hot topic of debate within applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites, as a large number are located several miles or more from services and facilities. The document will deal with the sustainability of the site later within this document, however, it is important to set out clearly, that sustainable alternative modes of transport, are viewed in a more holistic approach and manner by Planning Inspectors when dealing with appeals for Gypsy and Traveller sites.

9. Promoting sustainable transport

109. Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, using a vision-led approach to identify transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular places. This should involve:

- a) making transport considerations an important part of early engagement with local communities;
- b) ensuring patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places;
- c) understanding and addressing the potential impacts of development on transport networks;
- d) realising opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;
- e) identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use; and
- f) identifying, assessing and taking into account the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains.

We once again see the Governments clear direction of travel in attempting to bring forward development and remove as many obstacles to consent as is possible at Para 116;

116. Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

In Chapter 11 the NPPF sets out guidance on making effective use of land at Para 125, c) & d) looks at using land that has a use already,

125. Planning policies and decisions should:

c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, proposals for which should be approved unless substantial harm would be caused, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;

d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure)

At Chapter 15, we see guidance in relation to National Parks, which is of particular relevance to this planning proposal;

15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

188. Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework⁶⁵; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

189. Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads⁶⁶. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas

At Para 90, we see the Government is keen to restrict Major Development within these protected areas, however the site proposal is for a minor development,

190. When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development⁶⁷ other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

In Annexe 2 Glossary, the Government set out clarification on specific wording used within the NPPF and generally within planning matters;

Deliverable: To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. In particular:

(The Court case judgement in Chapman sets out the definition of deliverable)

a) sites which do not involve major development and have planning permission, and all sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within five years (for example because they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans).

b) where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.

There are also a number of Judicial High Court Judgements that deal with this topic, and this is of particular relevance to the development of Gypsy and Traveller sites, when assessing the GTAA and availability of other sites, where LPAs often try to assert that the applicants have failed to demonstrate that no other sites are available, which of course is rather difficult, as proving a negative is almost impossible.

Sustainable transport modes: Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, ultra low and zero emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

Windfall sites: Sites not specifically identified in the development plan.

It is clear, that the Government in revising the NPPF in December 2024, combined with the many ministerial interviews and general press releases, has a vision to reduce the red tape and burdens upon applicants, in an attempt to bring forward development to meet all of societies needs.

This clear direction of travel will take effort and commitment from everybody, not least the Local Planning Authorities and residents near to the proposal sites.

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS)

The PPTS is a separate planning document, to read in conjunction with the NPPF and it sets out specific matters in relation to Gypsy and Traveller site proposals.

3. The Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.

The Revision of the PPTS definition of a Gypsy and Traveller following the Lisa Smith Judgement, ruling that the 2015 definition was discriminatory, has shown a clear intent on behalf of the Government.

4. To help achieve this, the Government's aims in respect of traveller sites are:

- a) that local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning;
- b) to ensure that local planning authorities, working collaboratively, develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites;
- c) to encourage local planning authorities to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale;
- d) that plan-making and decision-taking should protect Green Belt from inappropriate development;
- e) to promote more private traveller site provision while recognising that there will always be those travellers who cannot provide their own sites;
- f) that plan-making and decision-taking should aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and make enforcement more effective;
- g) for local planning authorities to ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies;
- h) to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply;
- i) to reduce tensions between settled and traveller communities in plan-making and planning decisions;
- j) to enable provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure; and
- k) for local planning authorities to have due regard to the protection of local amenity and local environment.

At Para 10, the Government stipulate the requirement upon the LPA in regards to their local plans;

10. Local planning authorities should, in producing their Local Plan:

- a) identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against their locally set targets;
- b) identify a supply of specific, developable sites, or broad locations for growth, for years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for years 11-15;
- c) consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites, particularly if a local planning authority has special or strict planning constraints across its area (local planning authorities have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries);
- d) relate the number of pitches or plots to the circumstances of the specific size and location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density; and
- e) protect local amenity and environment.

At Para 11, the Government make it clear that where there is no identified need, criteria based policies should be used, this is set out in Policy SP33 as previously set out on page 15 of this document.

11. Criteria should be set to guide land supply allocations where there is identified need. Where there is no identified need, criteria-based policies should be included to provide a basis for decisions in case applications nevertheless come forward. Criteria based policies should be fair and should facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.

In recognising the benefits from a settled base, Para 13, looks at some key aspects,

13. Local planning authorities should ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally. Local planning authorities should, therefore, ensure that their policies:

- a) promote peaceful and integrated co-existence between the site and the local community;
- b) promote, in collaboration with commissioners of health services, access to appropriate health services;
- c) ensure that children can attend school on a regular basis;
- d) provide a settled base that reduces both the need for long-distance travelling and possible environmental damage caused by unauthorised encampment;
- e) provide for proper consideration of the effect of local environmental quality (such as noise and air quality) on the health and well-being of any travellers that may locate there or on others as a result of new development;
- f) avoid placing undue pressure on local infrastructure and services;
- g) do not locate sites in areas at high risk of flooding, including functional floodplains, given the particular vulnerability of caravans; and
- h) reflect the extent to which traditional lifestyles (whereby some travellers live and work from the same location thereby omitting many travel to work journeys) can contribute to sustainability.

In relation to sites located in rural areas, Policy C clearly indicates that in principle sites are acceptable, so long as the scale is appropriate;

Policy C: Sites in rural areas and the countryside

14. When assessing the suitability of sites in rural or semi-rural settings, local planning authorities should ensure that the scale of such sites does not dominate the nearest settled community.

At Para 26 the guidance on countryside locations which are away from existing settlements, should be very strictly limited, and yet again this does not preclude such development. In the instance of this proposal, the application site is not located in open countryside away from existing settlements, as it is on the edge of the village of Burley and adjacent to existing residential buildings and land uses.

26. Local planning authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan⁹. Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate, the nearest settled community, and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure.

And again at Para 28, we see that the Government gives clear instructions on the use of planning conditions to overcome objections to planning.

28. If a local planning authority cannot demonstrate an up-to-date 5 year supply of deliverable sites, the provisions in paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework apply. Local planning authorities should consider how they could overcome planning objections to particular proposals using planning conditions or planning obligations including:

In assessing the sites suitability in accordance with the relevant sections of the local plan policy, NPPF and PPTS, I will set out on the following pages, supporting material in relation to the applicant/s and the site itself.

Need Position

It is the responsibility of the LPA to demonstrate an up to date 5 year supply of deliverable sites as set out in Section 28 of the Planning Policy for traveller Sites (PPTS).

28. If a local planning authority cannot demonstrate an up-to-date 5 year supply of deliverable sites, the provisions in paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework apply. Local planning authorities should consider how they could overcome planning objections to particular proposals using planning conditions or planning obligations including:

Deliverable - Judicial Judgement - East Northamptonshire Council v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government 2020 - High Court Consent Order.

The accepted test is:
a site must be:

- available now,
- in a suitable location now, and
- achievable, with a realistic prospect that development will be delivered within five years.

I submit the Council's Gypsy and Travel Topic Paper as **Document Submission Ref: PD20** where at Page 22 we can see that the Council concludes it is currently able to demonstrate a 3.78 year deliverable sites provision.

f) Annual monitoring requirement April 2024 to March 2029	8.2 ¹¹
g) Deliverable supply April 2024 to March 2029	31
h) Total deliverable housing supply in years for period April 2024 to March 2029	3.78 ¹²

- 5.4 At the point of publication of the Proposed Submission Plan the council is unable to demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable pitches against the locally set target in the Proposed Submission Plan, with the position standing at 3.78 years.
- 5.5 However, this is due to the timing that new pitches are expected to come forward. It is anticipated that at the point of adoption of the plan, a supply in excess of 5 years will be demonstrable and that this will be maintained moving forwards. Windfall developments will be capable of topping up and ensuring supply is maintained later in the plan period.

The Council's position is that it is currently unable to demonstrate an up to date 5 year supply of sites.

In light of this stated position, Para 11(d) The presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged, this is often referred to as the so called 'Tilted Balance'.

The presumption in favour of sustainable development

11. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For **plan-making** this means that:

- a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;
- b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas⁶, unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area⁷; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

For **decision-taking** this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date⁸, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance⁷ provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination⁹.

⁶ As established through statements of common ground (see paragraph 28).

⁷ The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 189) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

⁸ This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where: the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (with the appropriate buffer as set out in paragraph 78); or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75% of) the housing requirement over the previous three years. See also paragraph 227.

⁹ The policies referred to are those in paragraphs 66 and 84 of chapter 5; 91 of chapter 7; 110 and 115 of chapter 9; 129 of chapter 11; and 135 and 139 of chapter 12.

Para 11(d) (i)(ii) Assessment

Footnote 7

7 The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 189) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

For footnote 7 to block the use of Para 11d) under i. There would need to be ‘Strong’ reason for refusing development and under ii. ‘Demonstrably’ outweigh the benefits

STRONG REASON to Refuse

How this plays out — two “families” of Footnote 7 policies

Practical experience (from appeal decisions and analysis) shows that not all Footnote 7 policies are equal in how strongly they carry refusal weight:

- **Policies with “in-policy full balance”:**
These are protections that already include a clear, policy-driven balancing exercise — e.g. Green Belt (“very special circumstances” test), major development in National Landscapes, or substantial harm/total loss to heritage assets. If a proposal fails those internal policy tests, that typically *will* amount to a strong reason for refusal. The “tilted balance” rarely applies because the internal test itself is decisive.
- **“Gateway” or procedural/threshold-type policies:**
These include tests like sequential (flood risk) tests, or “less than substantial harm” heritage balancing, or irreplaceable habitat protection. These policies raise a red flag but don’t themselves automatically tip the balance. Whether harm is “strong” enough depends on the real-world, site-specific consequences. In many cases, a conflict with a Footnote 7 policy under this group may be “significant” but not “strong enough” to refuse — so the “tilted balance” under 11(d)(ii) may still apply.

Application Site

The proposal represents a minor development and is not located within any of the protected sites, such as Habitat sites and those sites listed within Para 189 of the NPPF.

189. Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads⁶⁶. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

There are no STRONG reasons under Para 11d) (i) on which to refuse the development under The presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Para 11(d)(ii) Assessment - Sustainability

Footnote 9

9 The policies referred to are those in paragraphs 66 and 84 of chapter 5; 91 of chapter 7; 110 and 115 of chapter 9; 129 of chapter 11; and 135 and 139 of chapter 12.

Para 66 - The site is not a major development

Para 84 - The site is not an **isolated** site in the Countryside

Para 91 - This para is not relevant as it considers town centre uses

Para 110 - This proposal is not a significant development, but nevertheless the Appellants have shown that in addition to the wider benefits, there are realistic and viable alternative modes of transport.

Para 115 - It has been clearly evidenced that the site complies with a) through to d) of Para 115.

Para 129 - The proposal complies with Para 129, as it seeks to deliver the best use of the land to meet a local need, in an area that is not offended in terms of Character and Appearance as a result of the proposed development, which is well screened. The site complies with a) through to e) of Para 129.

Para 135 - There are no perceived or known conflicts with Para 135

Para 139 - There are no perceived or known conflicts with Para 139

Summary

There are no identified reasons that would significantly and demonstrably outweighs the benefits of granting permission and therefore Para 11(d) remains engaged.

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination⁹.

I will now review the sites access to services and shops as part of the overall sustainability of the site.

It should be noted, that neither the NPPF of the PPTS sets out specific distances to and from shops and services from which to judge a sites sustainability credentials, we supply information to give an overview of the accessibility of the site, but this represents just one aspect of the sites sustainability.

Sustainability

The PPTS at section 13 sets out a number of benefits, both personal and national which are derived from providing a settled base to Gypsies and Travellers.

13. Local planning authorities should ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally. Local planning authorities should, therefore, ensure that their policies:
- a) promote peaceful and integrated co-existence between the site and the local community;
 - b) promote, in collaboration with commissioners of health services, access to appropriate health services;
 - c) ensure that children can attend school on a regular basis;
 - d) provide a settled base that reduces both the need for long-distance travelling and possible environmental damage caused by unauthorised encampment;
 - e) provide for proper consideration of the effect of local environmental quality (such as noise and air quality) on the health and well-being of any travellers

This section clearly recognises the importance in providing access to medical care and regular access to education, I shall set out evidence that clearly shows a pattern between a reduced education standard and the high proportion of uk prisoners being from the G&T community, together with national costs associated with illegal encampments and most recently the tensions between the settled community and the traveller community from illegal encampments, where the G&T feel they have no alternative but to move onto land without permission because of the lack of available sites.

I will also provide a selection of appeal decision which show the rather more holistic approach taken by Inspectors when judging alternative transport options, access and distances to services.

Of particular interest and of note, is the appeal decision that White Planning were involved in at The Plough House, whereby the site was adjacent to the busy A1 Dual Carriageway with no option other to access the services by private car.

Submission Document Ref: PD21

Appeal Decision

Hearing held on 22 October 2025 (in person) & 23 October 2025 (online)

Site visit made on 22 October 2025

by Jane Smith MA MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/W/25/3368820

**The Plough House, 276 London Road, Biggleswade, Central Bedfordshire
SG18 9TB**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr A Connors against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
- The application Ref is CB/25/00305/FULL.
- The development is described as 'Demolition of 2 existing buildings and removal of pre-existing mobile home. Erection of acoustic sound barrier fence. Change of use of land for the creation of 4 Gypsy/Traveller Pitches, comprising the siting of 4 static caravans (net 3) and 4 touring caravans alongside the erection of 1 combined dayroom for use by family members (Part Retrospective).

Location

9. The site is around 2km outside Biggleswade and not within any settlement envelope defined in the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2021 (CBLP). Biggleswade is defined as a major service centre in the CBLP and provides an extensive range of services and facilities in and around the town centre, including primary and secondary schools, GP and dental services, and public transport to settlements further afield. There is a sizable retail park on the southern edge of the town, which is readily accessible from the A1 and provides both convenience and comparison shopping. There is also a filling station slightly closer to the appeal site, with a small convenience store.

10. The site is directly accessible only via the northbound carriageway, with access to and from the southbound carriageway being more circuitous. This major strategic route carries fast-flowing traffic and lacks pavements, bus services or dedicated cycle facilities. When the highway conditions are taken into account, travel by car is highly likely to be the norm.

11. In the CBLP, Policy SP7 sets out the general approach to windfall development outside settlement envelopes, which includes some qualified support for redevelopment of PDL. Policy BSP1 in the Biggleswade Neighbourhood Plan 2022 (BNP) directs growth predominantly towards the town centre and built-up areas. Neither policy mentions Gypsy and Traveller development, which is more specifically covered by Policy H7 of the CBLP. That sets out several criteria, which include that adequate schools, shops, healthcare, and other community facilities are within reasonable travelling distance. The supporting text states that what constitutes a reasonable travelling distance will vary in relation to location of the site and services, and the local pattern of development.

12. The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) does not preclude Traveller development in the countryside, but paragraph 26 states that new sites in open countryside that is away from existing settlements should be very strictly limited. The supporting text to Policy H7 similarly recognises that Gypsy and Traveller families may prefer to live in the countryside on privately owned and managed sites, while also making clear that the policy aims to direct development toward sites which are closer to existing settlements.

13. There is some tension between Policies SP7 and H7, which include different accessibility requirements. Policy SP7 supports redevelopment of PDL only where the site is, or can be made, accessible to nearby services and facilities by sustainable modes of transport. Policies BTM1 and BPD1 of the BNP likewise require that a balanced

and sustainable range of transport options is provided, proportionate to the scale and nature of the scheme and connecting to existing pedestrian or cycle infrastructure. In contrast, Policy H7 refers only to a reasonable travelling distance, with no reference to modes of transport.

14. The approach in Policy H7 is more closely aligned to the criteria in paragraph 13 of the PPTS, which defines sustainable Traveller sites for plan-making purposes in terms of providing access to school and health services from a settled base, without specifying whether that should include the ability to travel by means other than the private car. In turn, neither Policy SP7 nor the relevant policies in the BNP specifically preclude Traveller sites outside settlement boundaries, being silent in relation to that form of development.

15. The site is well connected to Biggleswade via the A1. The settlement is not visible, but it can be quickly accessed by car. As well as Plough House, there are several other developed sites strung sporadically along the A1. There are also open fields to either side of the road, and the site is in an area defined as countryside in the CBLP. Nevertheless, the roadside development and the major road itself limit the degree to which the appeal site is perceived as being in 'open countryside' or away from the settlement. The retail park on the edge of Biggleswade is very easily accessed by car and the journey is not time-consuming. The town centre is a relatively short distance beyond that, and the settlement as a whole provides the majority of services and facilities required for day to day living. While the southbound return route is slightly longer, it is not substantially more inconvenient.

16. The approach to sustainable development in the PPTS reflects the fact that those adopting a nomadic lifestyle are inherently reliant on travel by private motor vehicle, but that they require a settled base from which to access essential services. That approach continues to be articulated in the December 2024 version of the PPTS, notwithstanding the most recent changes to Annex 1.

17. The site would provide a settled base as described in the PPTS, within a reasonable travel distance of essential services, when the nature of the road network and travel time are taken into account. While paragraph 115 of the Framework requires that sustainable transport modes are prioritised, it also says that account should be taken of the type of development and its location. Therefore, the approach taken in the PPTS to the sustainable location of Gypsy and Traveller sites is more pertinent in this case.

18. The Council argues that other villages and towns would provide a better standard of accessibility and that other Gypsy and Traveller sites in the District are closer to settlements. Be that as it may, it is common ground between the parties that there are no alternative sites available to the proposed occupiers, and this appeal must be determined based on the merits of this particular location.

19. While I have considered the Lower Caldecote decision¹ highlighted by the Council, the Inspector's reasoning in that case focussed on the more limited range of services in Upper Caldecote and did not refer to the larger range of services in Biggleswade. Although the site may have had a similar relationship with the town centre, it was on the other side of the town, so did not have a similar relationship with the nearby retail park. The decision also mentions that previous appeal decisions on and near the Lower Caldecote site had taken a different view. Taking those factors into consideration, I have given the Inspector's conclusions in that case limited weight.

20. For the above reasons, I conclude that the development is suitably located having regard to relevant policies in the development plan and access to services and facilities. While it does not gain support from Policy SP7 or the relevant BNP policies, due to the level of reliance on private motor vehicles, it does accord with the locational criterion in Policy H7. Since that is the more relevant policy for Gypsy and Traveller development, the location accords with the development plan when read as a whole. It also accords with relevant criteria for sustainable Gypsy and Traveller development in the PPTS and does not conflict with the approach of exercising very strict control over new sites in open countryside and away from settlements.

Other Matters

40. The PPTS states that local planning authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in the open countryside that is 'away from' existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan. Despite the parties seeming to agree that the appeal site is broadly in an edge of settlement location, in relation to Wickford a little way to the north, the Council later said at the Hearing that it did not accept the site as being in a sustainable location, also that it considered the site to be isolated.

41. I note that the sustainability of the location was not given as a reason for the Council issuing the notice. I set out earlier in my decision that I considered the site to be relatively near to residential properties on established plotlands. I concur with the view that the site should be regarded as being located on the edge of, rather than away from, a settlement and not in an isolated location.

42. In terms of access to services and facilities, the appellants referred to the proximity of a shop, regularly used by the site occupiers, associated with a nearby petrol filling station on the A127 road to the west. The Council did not consider that this merited weight in view of the limited range of convenience goods that would be on offer.

43. Having visited the shop, which is likely to be within reasonable walking distance for most people, it seems to me that it would be equipped to cater for a variety of day-to-day food needs. A sustainable travel option would therefore be available to a degree. I am in no doubt, however, that it would be necessary to travel to Wickford in order to access a full range of services and facilities. It would be realistic to conclude that for reasons of convenience, distance and safety during hours of darkness there would be significant reliance on the private car in order to get to and from Wickford.

44. However, the Framework acknowledges that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas. Despite the likelihood of a very high degree of reliance on the private car, it seems to me that the length and duration of journeys necessary to access essential services and facilities **would be relatively moderate for a rural location**. There is also the potential for the **various pitch users to make shared trips**. The overall distances that would need to be travelled in order to access a range and choice of services are likely to be limited for these reasons. I consider that this weighs in favour of the conclusion that the appeal site should be regarded as in a relatively sustainable location.

The Inspector at 44 of their report, sets out the very sensible and appropriate approach to assessing the difference between urban and rural areas when it comes to answering the question of sustainable access to goods and services as well as recognising the opportunity to share trips.

It is unknown if this location had the benefit of a delivery service, but the appellants site does as evidenced, and would greatly reduce the need to use the private vehicle to access goods.

Sustainability of the appeal site.

60. *The sustainability of the appeal site is accepted by the Council. In general terms, I concur with that assessment **although the PPTS does not specifically refer to accessibility to services and facilities by foot and public transport as an aim. I therefore consider that the term 'accessibility' is more appropriate in this context.***

61. *Paragraphs 14 and 25 the PPTS implicitly accept that traveller sites may be located in rural areas when this will lessen opportunities for sustainable travel. The accessibility criteria set out for traveller sites in **paragraph 13 of the PPTS do not include distance from or means of transport to shops and services**, but do refer to considerations which are unique to traveller site applications: for example, the provision of **a settled base can reduce the need for long distance travelling and that traditional lifestyles**, whereby some travellers live and work from the same location, can omit travel to work journeys and **contribute to sustainability.***

62. *In general terms, the criteria set out in the PPTS apply to the appellant and his family. It is, however, still necessary to consider the site-specific factors and how they relate to the personal circumstances of the appellant and his family. In that context, whilst there a convenience store located a short distance from the appeal site, much of Kiln Lane is unmade and lacks street lighting. There would therefore be occasions when accessing that facility on foot would be difficult and/or an unattractive proposition. The school attended by Mr McDonagh's children is some distance away, as is the church that the family regularly attend. Attendance at both requires the use of a car. Other facilities are within 1 kilometre but equally require the use of a car, albeit the journey is relatively short.*

63. *Consequently, whilst the site is in a sustainable location, occupation of it does require use of a car for some if not most of day-to-day activities. Accordingly, the sustainable location of the appeal site is qualified and for that reason only attracts moderate weight in support of the development.*

The Inspector sets out and 'qualifies' the approach taken to fully assess the basis of sustainable within the context of the PPTS, Para 13.

APP/X0415/C/20/3255353 Lodge Lane, Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire

Access to shops and services

35. *The appellants cite the proximity of the site to Little Chalfont and Chorleywood which in their view results in the site being in a reasonably sustainable location. Whilst they have not referred to the nature of the shops and services the Council has done so.*

36. *Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that new development has regard to sustainable development principles including being in locations which are easily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. Access to Little Chalfont and Chorleywood by foot or cycle would be via, at least in part, unlit roads with no pavements, which would not make these forms of transport attractive particularly for less mobile people and young children. There is no evidence before me of the accessibility of bus services serving the site and surrounding villages. It follows that new development in this location does not accord with Policy CS4.*

37. *The appellants refer to an appeal decision relating to a site in Little Hadham (Appeal Ref. APP/J1915/W/19/3234671) (the Little Hadham appeal). They reflect on the Inspector's conclusions in that case which they have taken to be that the same sustainability criteria that is applied to the settled population should not be applied to gypsies and travellers. I concur with that approach given that the more general aim in the PPTS is the provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, welfare and employment infrastructure.*

38. The Inspector in the Little Hadham case also referred to relevant national policy in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework, which although now replaced by the revised Framework still sets out that the opportunities to maximise sustainable transport will vary between urban and rural areas.

39. The Council argues that the distances to shops and services were shorter in the Little Hadham appeal. However, on the basis of the evidence before me access to such facilities by the residents of the appeal site would involve trips of a short duration. Such trips would be comparable to those undertaken by the settled population in a rural area and would render the site a suitable location from which travellers could access necessary facilities.

40. I conclude that the site is not in a location that is easily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling and hence the development fails to comply with a principle identified by Policy CS4. However, taking account of the PPTS and the Framework, which are both material considerations, I do not find that the limitations on the accessibility of shops and services in this case render the site unsuitable as a gypsy and traveller site.

For the purposes of completeness, the full report in the referenced appeal (Appeal Ref. APP/ J1915/W/ 19/3234671) (the Little Hadham appeal), is also submitted.

The report deals with sustainable location on page 3, Para 12 through 22.

It clearly sets out the different approach to sustainable locations afforded to Gypsy and Traveller lifestyles and the offset benefits to providing a settled base.

The application site is located in the countryside beyond the settlement boundary, however it is closely related to the existing pattern of residential development.

The Government set out in Section 14 of the PPTS that sites in countryside locations are acceptable but that they should not over dominate the nearest settled community.

Policy C: Sites in rural areas and the countryside

14. When assessing the suitability of sites in rural or semi-rural settings, local planning authorities should ensure that the scale of such sites does not dominate the nearest settled community.

Section 26 directs that restrictions to new sites which are isolated or away from existing settlements should be applied, but in this instance, the application site is not isolated or away from the existing settlement.

26. Local planning authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan⁹. Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate, the nearest settled community, and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure.

Walking/Cycle Provision

Shortly Adjacent to home is designated public footpaths and cycle lanes. Road width and bending nature of the road on corners creates slower traffic and greater motorist awareness. Pedestrian sign, max 50 sign, traffic lights (Pelican Lights) urges for drivers to slow down. Different points along the road, and their associated provisions are shown below. It is clear that these facilities are in good condition and will provide safe, reliable travel for those using the route.

NorthWest Side of the site



North side of the site

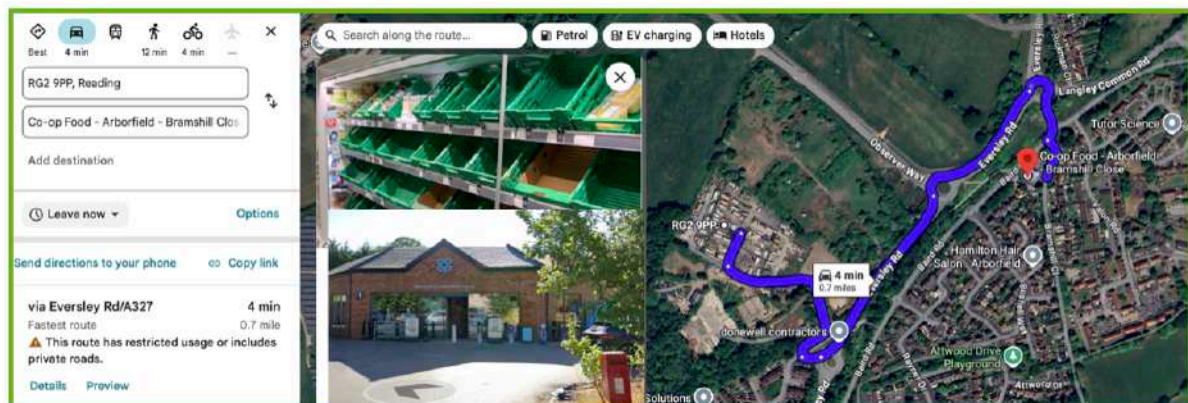


North Side of the site shows safe pedestrian access to the site and local amenity, Pelican controlled signals lights support traffic to slow down. Site is supported by many street lights which provides extra security for the occupants .

Convenience Stores

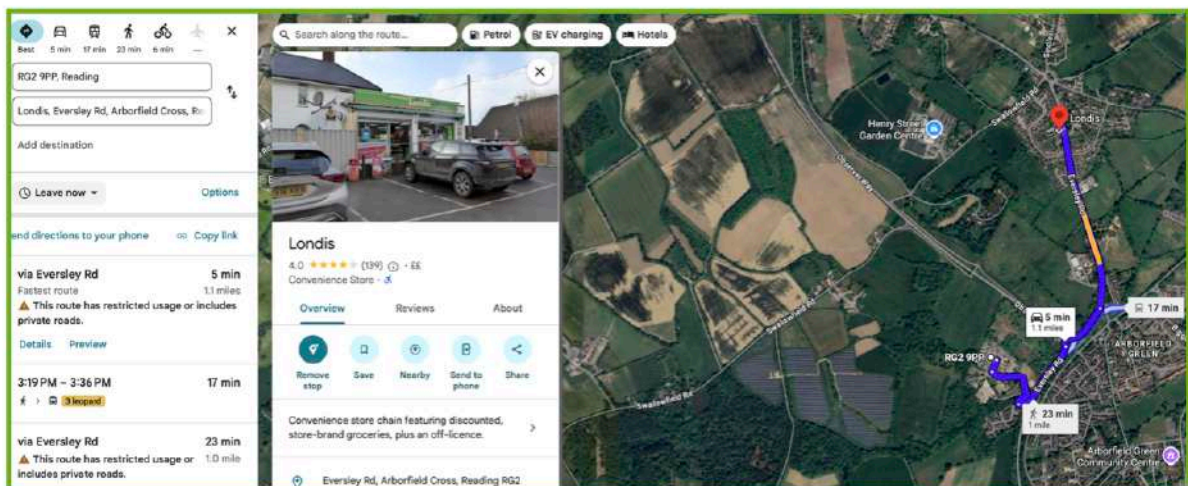
The nearest convenience store to the site is Co-op Food -Arborfield found on Bramshill Close, 27 Bramshill Cl, Arborfield, Reading RG2 9PL ;It is 0.7 miles away; a 4 minute drive/12 minutes walk/ 4 minute cycle :

This shop offers all daily essentials required - including groceries and all day to day essentials. It is open Monday - Saturday 7am - 10pm, Sundays 8am - 10pm; this ensures that access to essentials and household top-ups and pay point , these are available at any convenient hour of the day, giving the site occupant great reliability for goods and service purchase. This is home to post box .



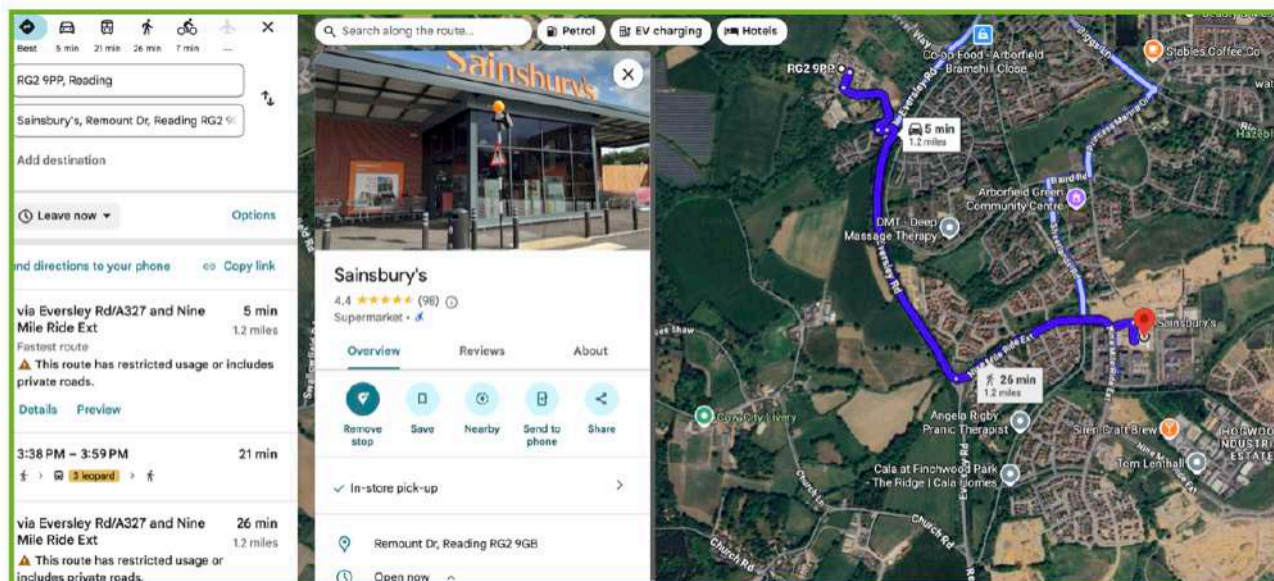
Alternative convenience Stores:

The second nearest convenience store to the site is Londis, Eversley Rd, found on Arborfield Cross, Reading RG2 9PQ , it is 1.1 miles away; a 5 minute drive/23 minute walk/6 minute cycle. This store also provides in post services and it is home to another Royal Mail post box.



Supermarket

The nearest supermarket to the site is Sainsbury's, found Remount Dr, Reading RG2 9GB
It is 1.2 miles away; 5 minute drive/11 bus route/29 minutes walk/21 mins cycle:



This shop offers all household essentials - offering a broad range of food and non-food goods for main weekly shopping needs.

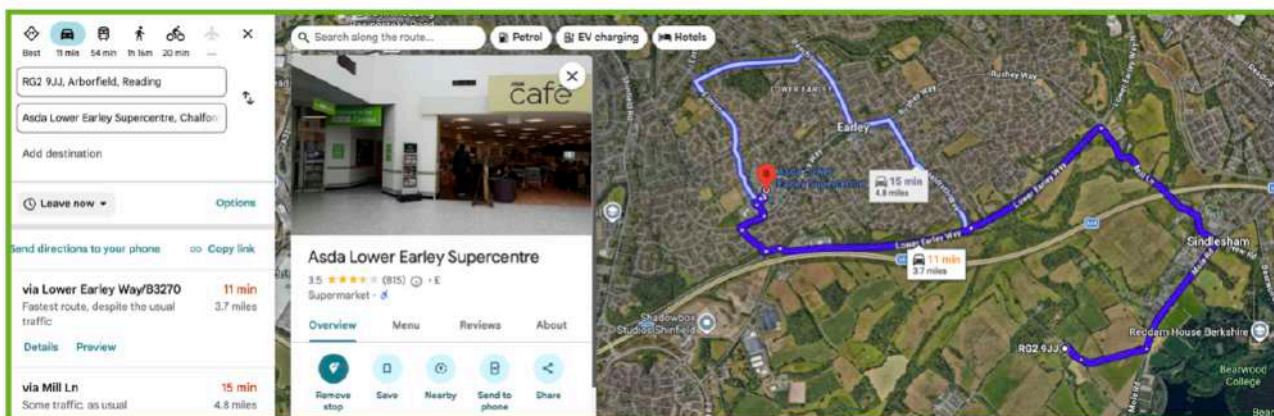
The supermarket is open Monday - Saturday 7am -11pm, Sundays 10am - 4pm - offering availability to goods at any reasonable time.

This supermarket is also accessible via bus route 6 and takes around 11 minutes.

This supermarket got petrol station available just at the entrance .

Alternative Supermarket Stores:

Below is a screenshot of nearest alternative Asda found on Lower Earley Super centre, Chalfont Way, Lower Earley, Reading RG6 5TT, its 1.2 miles, 5 minutes drive/7 minutes cycle.



Home Delivery Service

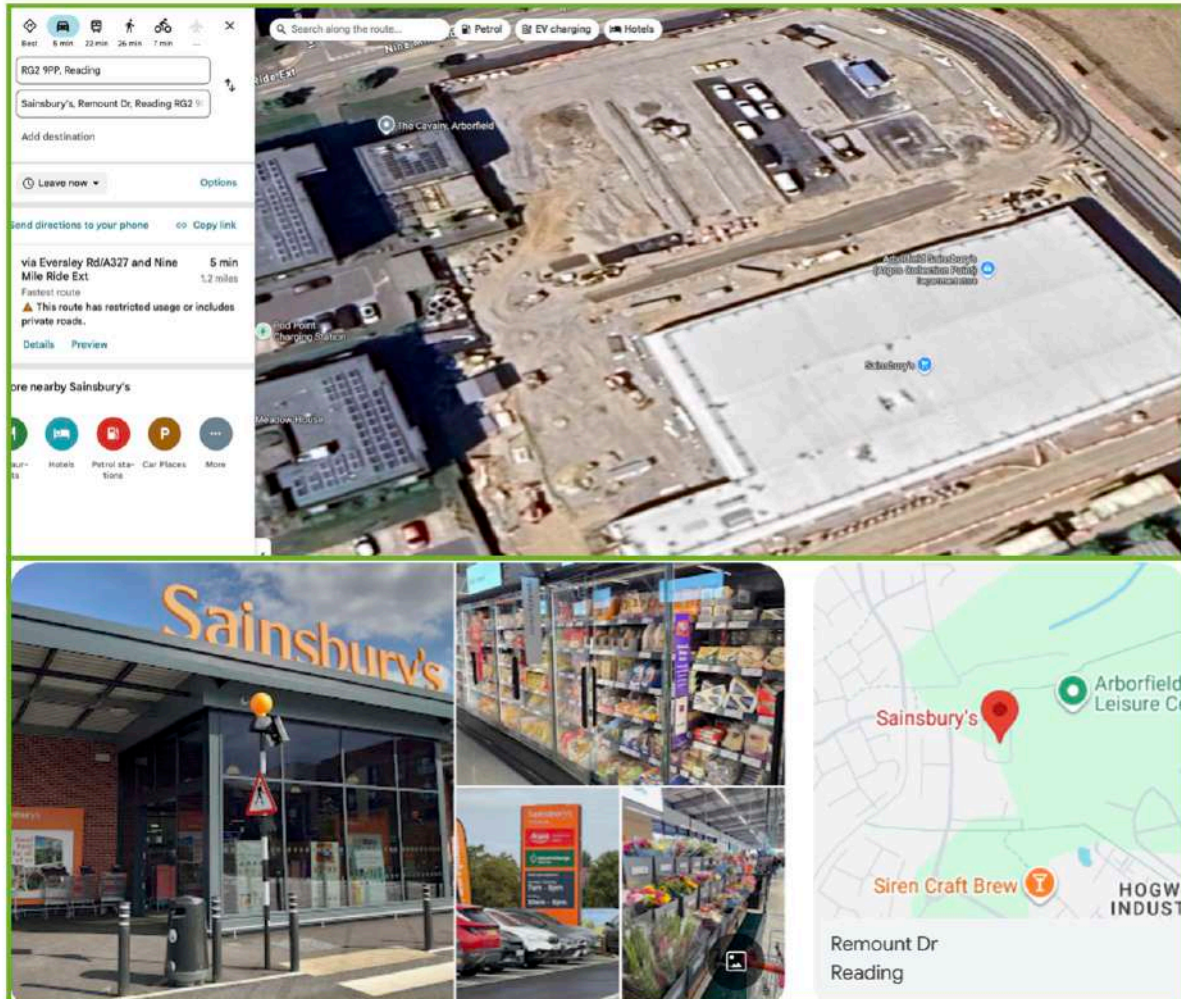
Home delivery service available from Ocado with options for 60 minutes standard slots or 4 hours saver slots.



Highfield Park - Caravan 1 Plot 21, Highfield Park, Eversley Road, Arborfield, RG2 9PP, United Kingdom							
Standard				New 4-hour			
Apr	Thu 30	Fri 01	Sat 02	Sun 03	Mon 04	Tue 05	Wed 06
Morning							
5:30-6:30am	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6:00-7:00am	-	-	£0	£0	£0	-	£0
6:30-7:30am	-	-	£0	£0	£0	-	£0
7:00-8:00am	-	-	£0	£0	£0	-	£0
7:30-8:30am	-	-	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
8:00-9:00am	-	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
8:30-9:30am	-	-	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
9:00-10:00am	-	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
9:30-10:30am	-	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
10:00-11:00am	-	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
10:30-11:30am	-	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
11:00-12:00pm	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
11:30-12:30pm	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Afternoon							
12:00-1:00pm	-	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
12:30-1:30pm	-	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
1:00-2:00pm	-	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
2:00-3:00pm	-	-	£0	-	£0	-	£0
3:00-4:00pm	£0	£0	£0	£0	-	£0	£0
4:00-5:00pm	-	-	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
4:30-5:30pm	£0	-	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
5:00-6:00pm	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
5:30-6:30pm	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Evening							
6:00-7:00pm	-	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
6:30-7:30pm	£0	£0	-	£0	£0	£0	£0
7:00-8:00pm	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
7:30-8:30pm	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
8:00-9:00pm	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
8:30-9:30pm	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
9:00-10:00pm	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	-	£0
9:30-10:30pm	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	-	£0
10:00-11:00pm	£0	£0	-	£0	£0	-	£0
10:30-11:30pm	£0	£0	-	£0	-	-	£0
11:00-11:59pm	£0	-	-	£0	-	-	-

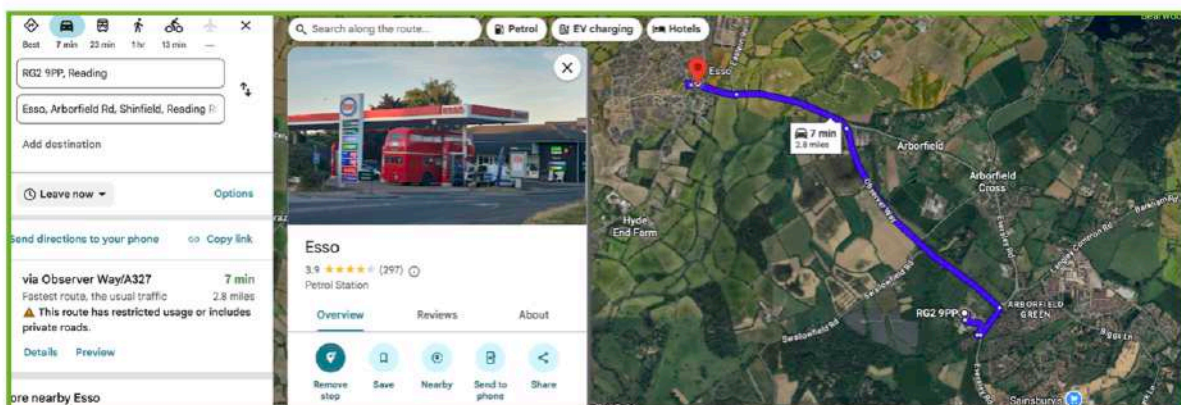
Petrol Stations

The nearest petrol station to the site is Sainsbury's, found Remount Dr, Reading RG2 9GB
It is 1.2 miles away; 5 minute drive/11 bus route/29 minutes walk/21 mins cycle:
Petrol station is open Monday to Saturday 7am - 10pm, Sunday 8am - 10pm; offering its services such another convenience store and pharmacy . This store has been recently open



Alternative petrol station

Alternative petrol station is Esso, found on Arborfield Rd, Shinfield, Reading RG2 9D

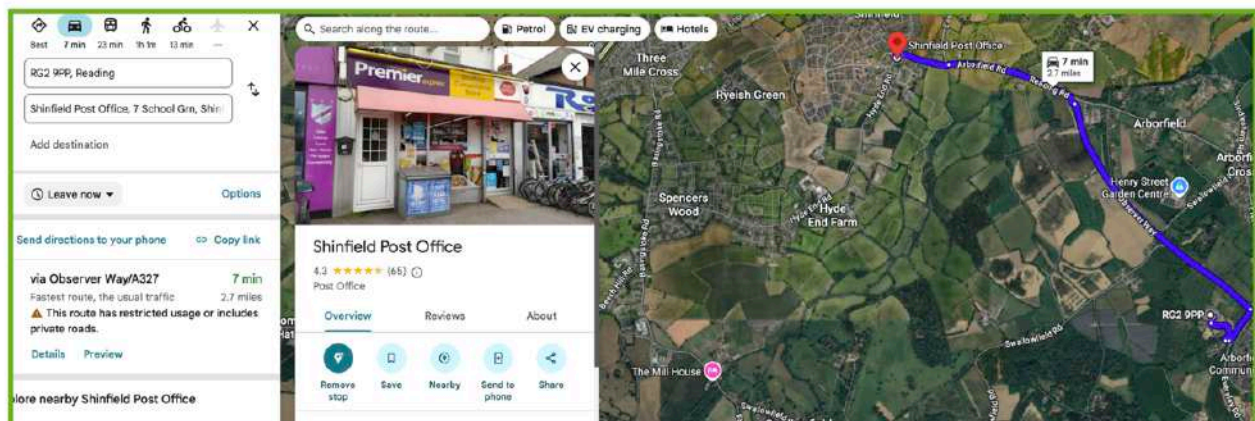


Postal Services

The nearest post box to the site, is found outside of Co-op Food -Arborfield found on Bramshill Close, 27 Bramshill Cl, Arborfield, Reading RG2 9PL ;It is 0.7 miles away; a 4 minute drive/12 minutes walk/4 minute cycle :

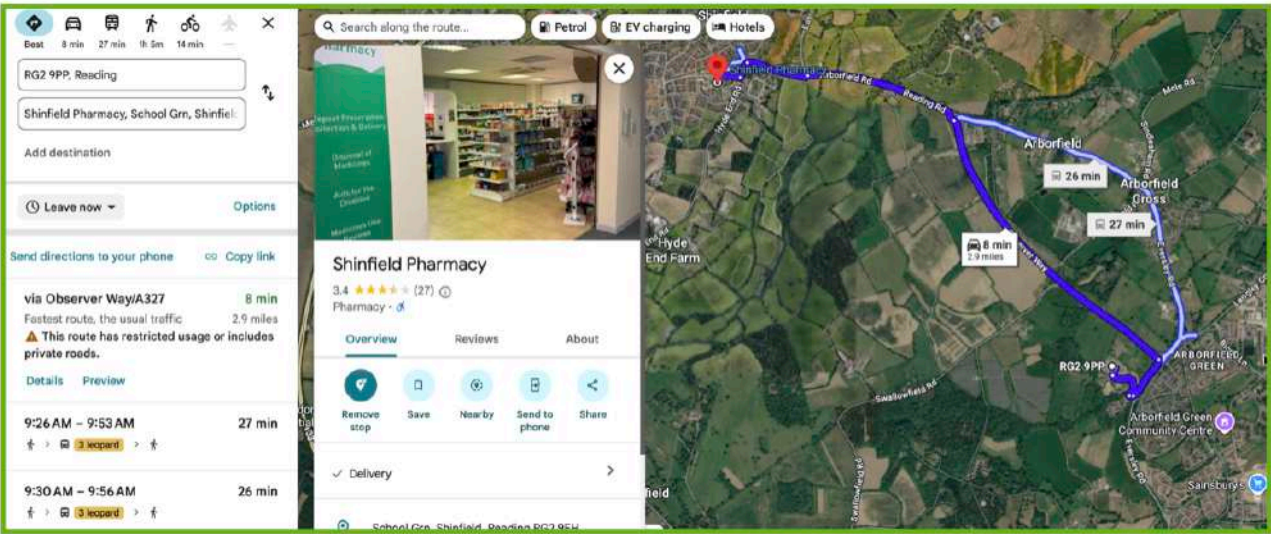


The nearest **Post Office** to the site Shinfield Post Office, found 7 School Grn, Shinfield, Reading RG2 9EE : It is 2.7 away. It is a 7 minute drive/1 minute cycle.
Post office offers bank services as well.



Pharmacy

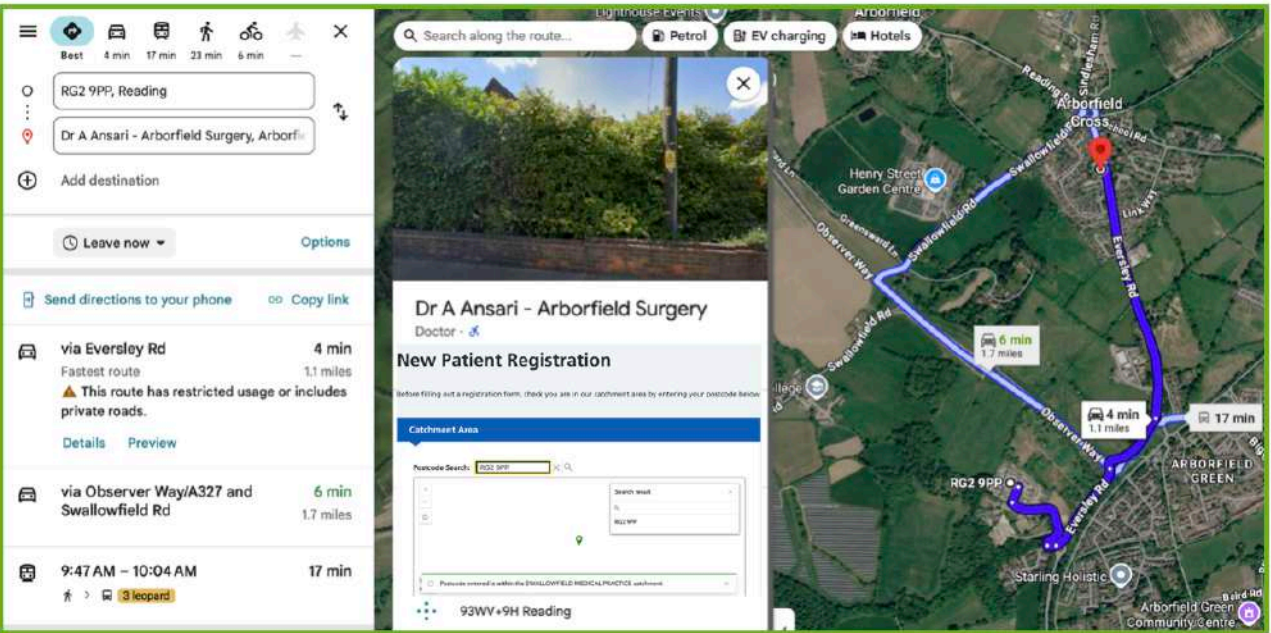
The nearest pharmacy to the site, is Shinfield Pharmacy, found on School Grn, Shinfield, Reading RG2 9EH; It is 2.9 miles away, being a 8 minute drive/27 minutes by bus /14 minutes cycle .



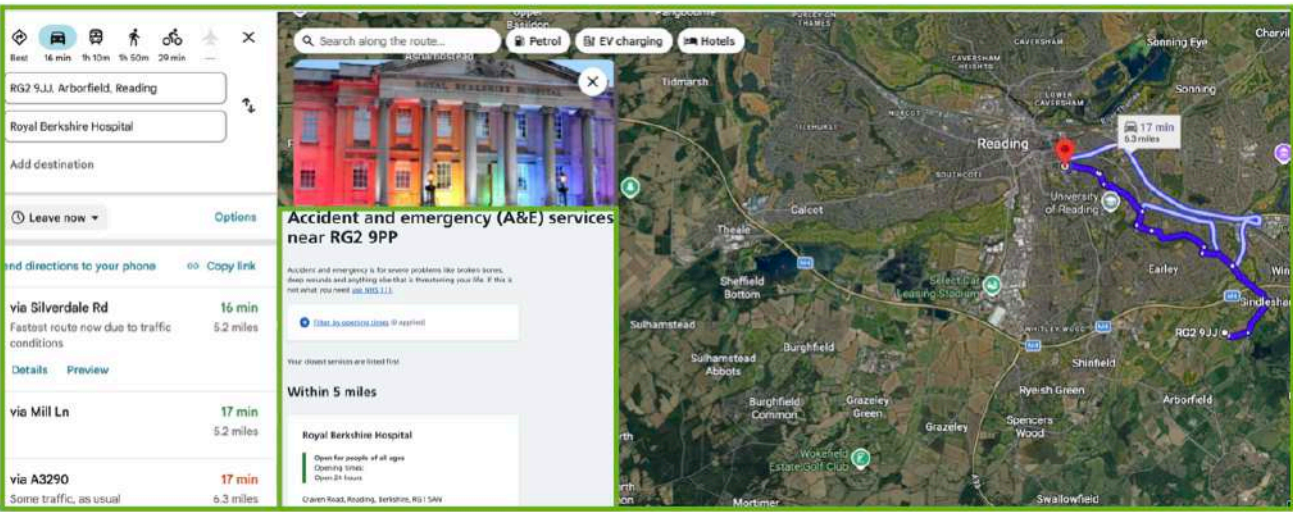
Pharmacy offers traditional pharmacy products, and allows customers to pick up prescriptions and purchase medical goods you'd expect from a traditional pharmacy, whilst also offering various advice services you would find within a Health and clinic like Blood pressure check an vaccine centre. It is open Monday to Friday 9am - 6pm with an hour close for staff lunch break between 1p-2pm giving great reliability for health and medical goods.

The nearest **GP Surgery** to the site, is Dr A Ansari - Arborfield Surgery, Arborfield Village Hall, Eversley Road, Arborfield Cross, Reading RG2 9PQ; it is 1.5 miles away, being a 6 minute drive/36 minute walk/12minute cycle.

Site occupants would need to register with Swallowfield GP Surgery and this is location where they would attend within the catchment area .



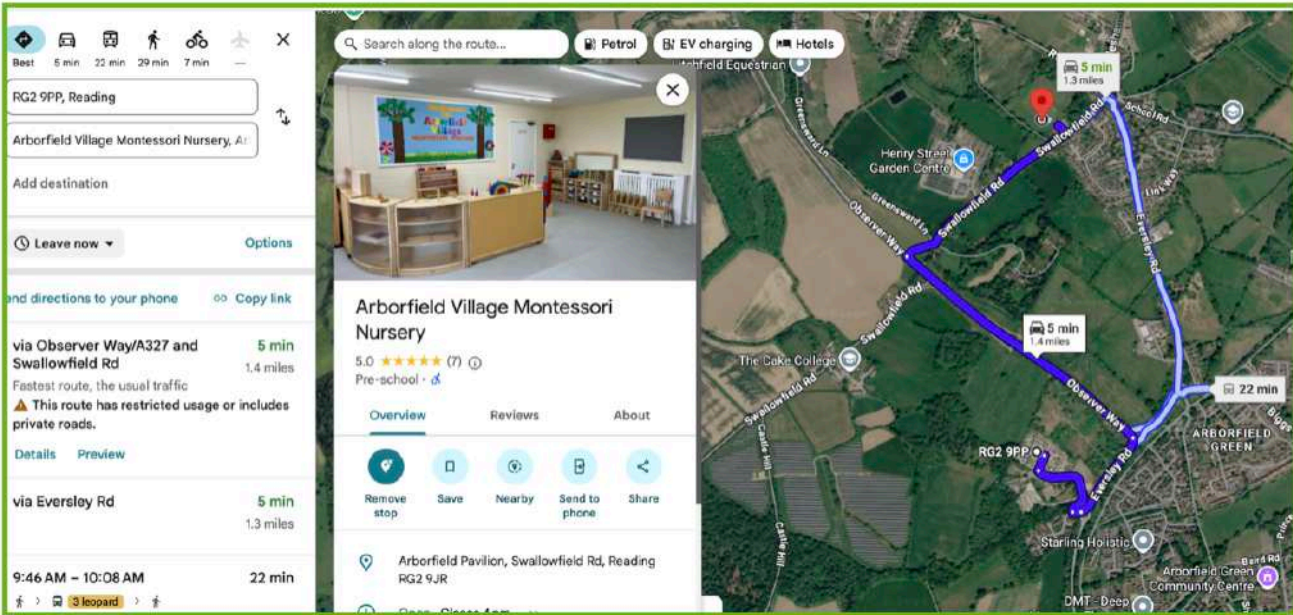
The nearest hospital, with **A&E services** is Royal Berkshire Hospital found on Craven Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AN This is typically, *according to Google Maps*, it is 5.2 miles away/16 minutes drive



Schooling/Education

A comprehensive selection of educational facilities are available for future child occupants of the site, all conveniently located in close proximity.

Arborfield Village Montessori Nursery, found on Arborfield Pavilion, Swallowfield Rd, Reading RG2 9JR ; this is 1.4 miles/5 minutes drive/29 minutes walk/7 minutes cycle.

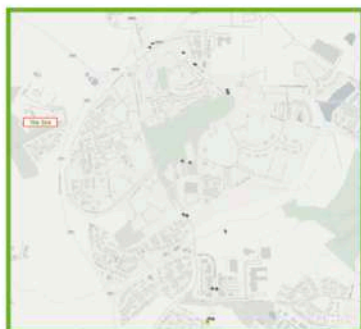
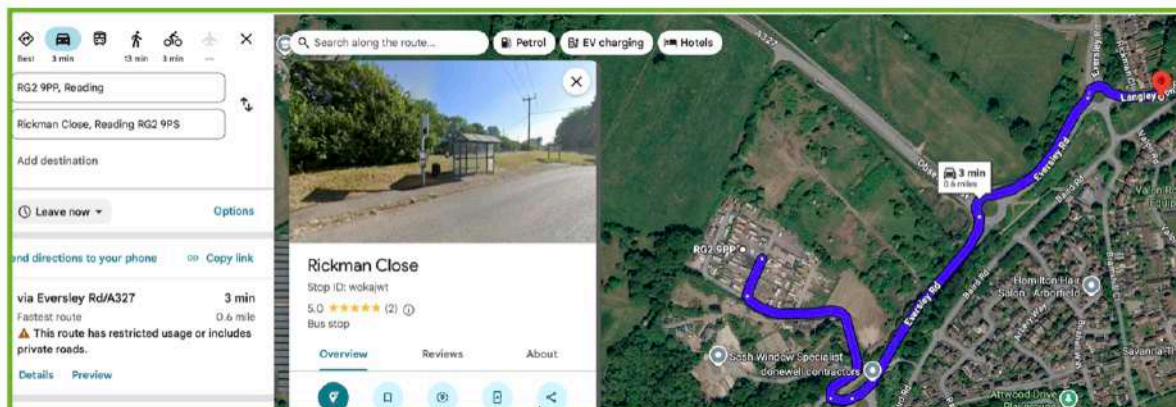


Type of Amenity	Destination	Distance from site	Drive Time	Walk Time
Nursery	Hazebrouck Day Nursery and Pre-School, The Community Centre, Sheerlands Road, Arborfield, Reading RG2 9ND	1.4 miles	5 minutes	20 minutes
Primary School	Farley Hill Primary School, Baston Rd, Reading RG2 9YW	1.0 mile	4 minutes	20 mintes
Primary school	The Coombes C Of E Primary School, School Rd, Arborfield Cross, Reading RG2 9NX	1.2 miles	5 minutes	27 minutes
Secondary School	Bohunt School Wokingham, Remount Dr, Arborfield, Reading RG2 9GB	1.2 miles	4 minutes	26 minutes
Full SEN School	Groveside School, 40 Christchurch Rd, Reading RG2 7AT	5.7 miles	16 minutes	> 1

Public Transport

The nearest bus stop “Rickman Close” to the site is found 0.6 mile away. 3 mins drive/13minute walk/ 3 mins cycle

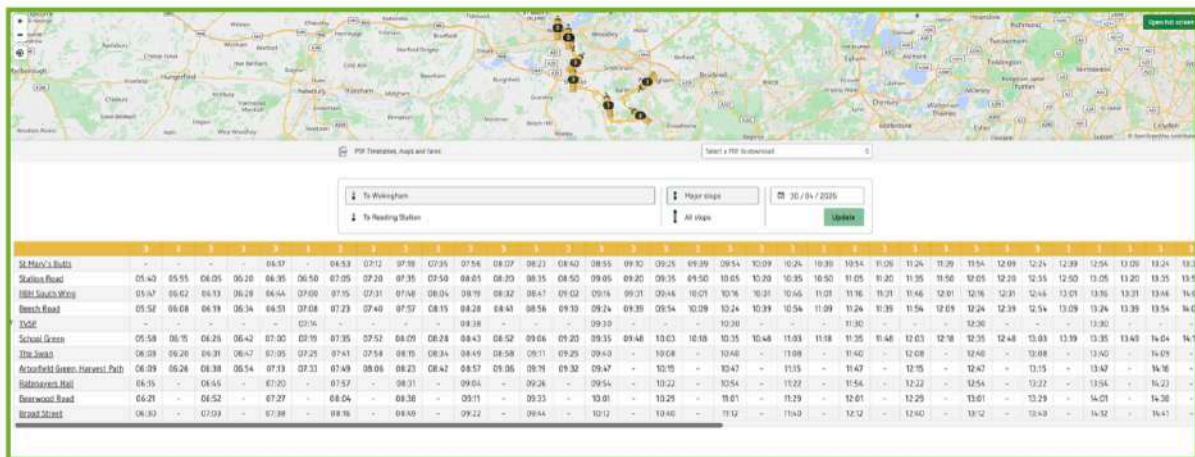
The runs on Bus Service 3 . It has direct service to Reading



Bus stops near the site

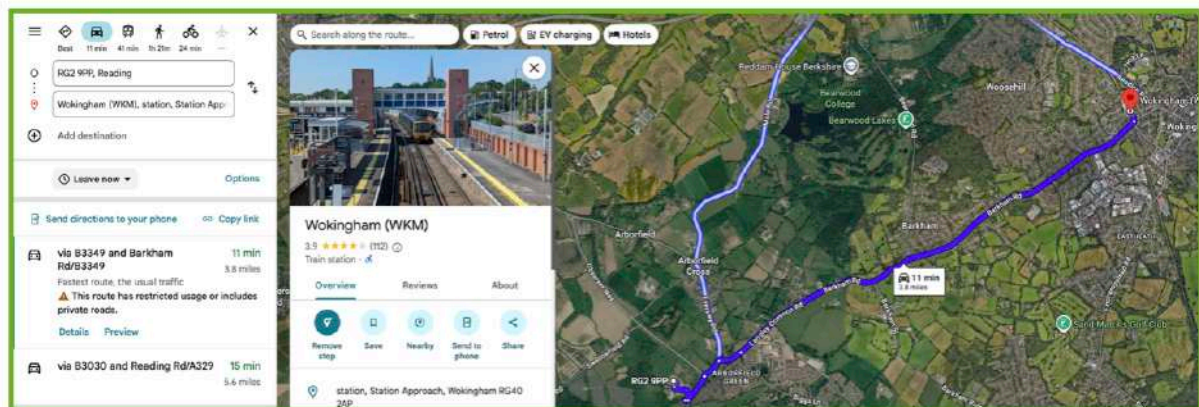
Bus route number 3





Train station

The closest train station from the site is, Wokingham (WKM), station, Station Approach, Wokingham RG40 2AP 3.8 miles away. This would otherwise be a 11 minute car journey/41 mins by bus/24 minutes cycle.



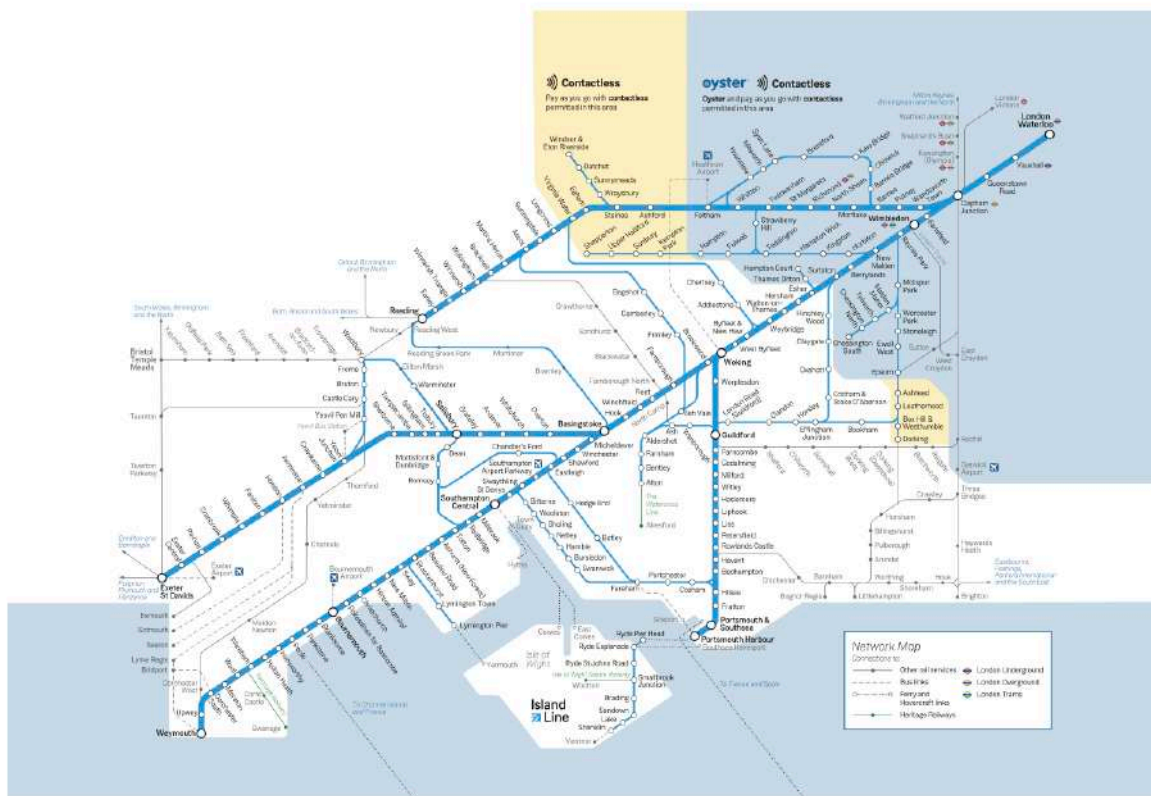
The stations home to car parking, so there is safe storage for vehicles, onward travels via public transport.
The train runs approximately every 35 minutes and it offers a direct connection either to London, Gatwick Reading and many more . Trains are run by Southern Western Rail way and Western Rail Way.

Wokingham station live train times

View up to two hours of live departures and arrivals status information for Wokingham station. Check train times for any future services.

Status	Depart time	Destination	Platform	Operator
✓	13:27	Reading	2	South Western Railway
✓	13:33	Gatwick Airport	1	Great Western Railway
✓	13:46	Reading	2	Great Western Railway
✓	13:53	London Waterloo	1	South Western Railway

SWR Network map



GWR Network Map



In addition to the site being considered to be located in a sustainable location, there are additional benefits derived from Gypsy and Traveller families having a settled base.

Settled Base Benefits

There are benefits to the Local Communities and the Nation as a whole in providing travellers and Gypsies with a permanent settled base, that should be fully considered in any planning balancing exercise.

Public Interest

There is a real benefit to the public interest in bringing forward permanent and settled sites for travellers in the UK, where there is a significant shortage of sites.

The recent ruling in the in the High Court 14 May 2024, in relation to the Police Act 2022, a case brought by Wendy Smith and others, the Judge ruled that parts of the Act, were discriminatory and in breach of the European Convention of Human Rights.

The ongoing shortage of transit site provision and overall pitch provision both locally and nationally combined with the persistent hostile approach to gypsies and travellers, has ensured that Gypsy and Travellers are often left with little choice when it comes to securing homes for themselves.

Such as;

Raising education standards for children, with a low level of reading and writing being a common factor in criminal sentencing and those persons in prison. The effects of keeping people out of a life of crime and in paid employment are substantial.

It is reported by the Ministry of Justice that 57% of adults in prison in the UK have a reading level below that of an average 11 year old, with a yearly cost of £45,000 to house a single prisoner.

Access to regular mainstream education must be priority for the nation and it is widely reported that those Travellers with a settled base will ensure attendance to school for all children typically to the age of 12 and in an increasing number of cases beyond.

The screenshot shows the 'Introduction' page of a report from HMIP (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons). The page title is 'Introduction'. The left sidebar contains a table of contents with links to 'Contents', 'Foreword', 'Executive summary', 'Introduction', 'Context', 'Reading education is not given sufficient priority in the prison regime', 'Much education provision was not organised in a way that supports prisoners to improve their reading', 'The curriculum was not well designed to improve reading', 'Prisoners with the greatest need to improve their reading generally received the least support', 'Recommendations arising from the research', 'Methodology', 'Limitations', 'Annex A', and 'Annex B'. There is also a 'Print this page' button. The main content area starts with the title 'Introduction' and a sub-header 'Ofsted inspects the overall effectiveness of education, skills and work in prisons and young offender institutions (YOIs) as part of HMIP's joint inspections of prisons.' The text discusses the findings of a 2008 study and a 2014 study, noting that reading education in prisons is poor and that prisoners have lower literacy levels than the general population. A red box highlights a key finding: 'Prisoners have much lower levels of literacy than the general population. The most recent data published by the Ministry of Justice shows that 57% of adult prisoners taking initial assessments had literacy levels below those expected of an 11-year-old.' The text continues to discuss the impact of low reading ability on prisoners' lives and the need for improvement.

Introduction

Ofsted inspects the overall effectiveness of education, skills and work in prisons and young offender institutions (YOIs) as part of HMIP's joint inspections of prisons.

When we carried out research into prison education in 2008, we found that several aspects of it were poor. For example, curriculums did not take account of what prisoners had learned before, records of prisoners' learning were not transferred between prisons and assessments of prisoners' educational needs on entry were often inaccurate or not used. Sadly, our new study has found that there has been little progress in the last 14 years.

We recently published a commentary which concluded that prison education is still in a poor state. As a result, Ofsted and HMIP called for prison education to be given much greater attention. We committed to carrying out a year-long review of prison education, which included this research into reading in prisons.

Prisoners have much lower levels of literacy than the general population. The most recent data published by the Ministry of Justice shows that 57% of adult prisoners taking initial assessments had literacy levels below those expected of an 11-year-old.

Low reading ability limits prisoners' ability to navigate life in prison. For example, they may struggle to access written information, such as family and legal correspondence, menus or faith-based texts, and struggle to fill out forms. This makes them more vulnerable and puts them at risk of becoming isolated. It also prevents them from fully participating in the purposeful activities available in the prison such as education or work. If they cannot read proficiently, their time in prison, especially during long sentences, can become even more challenging and unproductive.

A lack of reading skills also limits prisoners' ability to navigate life after prison. Prisoners without employment-related skills and knowledge are likely to find it more difficult to access opportunities for rehabilitation and resettlement on release. For example, completing forms to open a bank account and applying for jobs, education or training become difficult or impossible tasks. This may make it less likely that they will get into work and more likely that they will reoffend.

In prisons, reading education is currently delivered through wider English classes. These include functional skills classes, which teach the core skills required for employment and independent living. These classes include speaking and listening, reading and writing. Reading skills are also included as part of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes, which teach those whose first language is not English to read in English. When prisoners cannot read at all, a voluntary programme to teach reading is sometimes available, at the discretion of the governor.

Since 2018, functional skills qualification content has included a greater focus on the theory behind how you learn to read. Prisoners need to have learned, securely, the underpinning knowledge in reading in order to read well. For example, to read menus, letters from family or legal correspondence, prisoners need to have knowledge of the fundamental blocks that make up learning to read.

A reduction in illegal encampments or encampments which result in significant infrastructure costs, in matters such as security, policing and clean up bills, the cost of which is all met with taxpayer funds.

In October 2018 the Daily Echo Newspaper, the South Coasts local paper reported that illegal encampments has costs the taxpayer in just 3 years, over £2000000.00 in clean up costs.

There is clearly an overriding public interest in securing lawful plots and pitches in which to provide settled bases to the travellers so they do not turn to an illegal roadside existence.

dailyecho.co.uk

Daily Echo

Cleaning up after travellers cost £2m - new figures reveal



As well as that, the new fixed penalty notice for littering will rise by £20 - from £80 to £100.

Share



15 Comments

CLEANING up traveller camps costs taxpayer £2m - but is also hitting South East farmers and landowners hard, says CLA (The Country Land and Business Association).

It's not just the taxpayer paying clean-up bills for travellers' camps, the CLA has warned - farmers and landowners are being hit hard in the pocket too.

It comes as a BBC investigation has discovered that it has cost the public purse almost £2 million in less than three years in the South. The BBC said the bill accounts for more than 1,400 illegal encampments that have been reported since 2015.

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Welfare and Health

The ability to provide an accessible and permanent postal address enables family members to access the medical services available to citizens of the United Kingdom and for all members of the family, including those more vulnerable or unable to make their own decisions, such as the Child, to not penalised by the choice of their parents.

In addition, families are able to access other Government financial benefits they maybe entitled to, which in turns raises the standards of care and lifestyle of the resident dependants.

Page 41 of 62

Updated November 2023

Briefing: Economic and financial exclusion experienced by Gypsies and Travellers in England

Friends, Families & Travellers

Briefing: Economic and financial exclusion experienced by Gypsies and Travellers in England, April 2023

Compiled by Abbie Kirkby, Billie Dolling, John Henry Phillips, Victoria Gilmore

Key facts

- It is estimated there are 300,000 Gypsies and Travellers in the UK.
- 53% of Gypsies and Travellers who responded to the [2021 Census](#) were economically inactive^{1,2}.
- Of [2021 Census](#) respondents who identified as Gypsies and Travellers, 41% were employed, including 15% in self-employment.
- Gypsies, Roma and Travellers have the [lowest educational attainment](#), at all key stages up to and including KS4, out of any ethnic groups in the UK.
- The life expectancy of Gypsies and Travellers is [10-25 years shorter](#) than the general population.
- The [2021 Census](#) reported Gypsies and Travellers to be the ethnic groups which provided the highest levels of unpaid care of 50 hours or more.
- Gypsies and Travellers have the highest level of disability out of all ethnic groups at [16%](#), double that of the overall population.
- The [National Barometer of Prejudice and Discrimination](#) found Gypsies and Travellers to be the ethnic groups that people held the highest level of prejudice towards, compared with other protected characteristic groups.

It is clear that changes are needed, if we are to make longterm changes to both the quality and standard of living for Gypsies and Travellers combined with ensuring that in doing so, there is a cohesion with members of the settled community.

To remove prejudice and racism will take time and change from Gypsies and Travellers as well as those members who hold the feelings towards this sector of society.

In providing access to education, job opportunities, balanced medical and financial assistance, I consider that these will underpin the pathway to ensuring that overtime significant benefits are delivered to all parts of society.

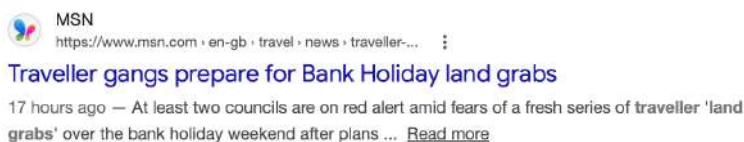
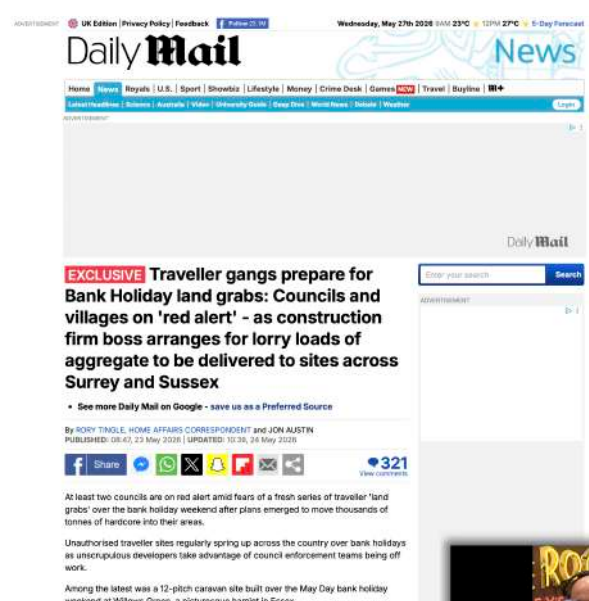
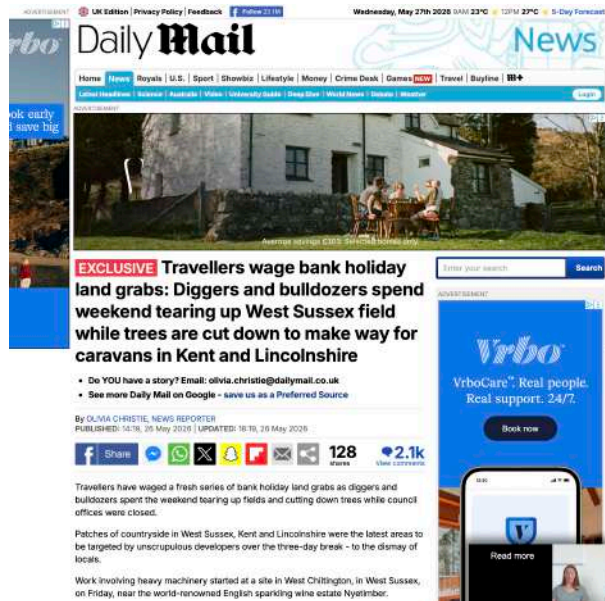
The sustainable benefits delivered by providing a settled base are wide and vast, to both the applicants but also to the settled community.

It is considered that the application site is a sustainable location when all of the relevant measurable metrics and legislation is considered.

Recent Newspaper Headlines

In recent months we have seen more and more Gypsy and Traveller families having to take the drastic action of moving onto land without first having secured planning permission. These steps are not taken lightly and are often as a result of previous frustrations and perceived prejudice experienced. This can result in significant legal and court costs as well as immense unrest between different sectors of the communities.

It is imperative that a greater number of consents are given to ensure that all persons identified housing needs are being met.



The language and phrasing often associated with sensational media reporting of Gypsy and Traveller applications or where sites have been partially or fully developed prior to obtaining planning consent is often borderline racist.

TRAVELLERS TIMES

NEWS WHAT'S ON FEATURES HERITAGE GET ADVICE TRAVELLERS TALK TT Vision

RACISM WITHOUT CONSEQUENCE: HOW THE UK MEDIA AND INSTITUTIONS CONTINUE TO DEMONISE GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

8 July 2025

Related Stories

- 1 Candles of Remembrance & Exhibition - 100 Years of the New Forest Campsites
- 2 Heathcliff wasn't like a Gypsy - He WAS a Gypsy, says Romani campaigner
- 3 Traveller site residents wait as fate of nearby controversial lithium-ion storage development hangs in balance
- 4 National Kinship Care Framework Failing Gypsy and Traveller Children - Experts and Carers Warn
- 5 Justice for Ver Meadows fire victims rally set to go ahead next Monday

UPLOAD YOUR FEATURE

In the UK today, racism against Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers (GRT) remains one of the last socially acceptable forms of prejudice. While other communities see support, progress, and protection from harmful stereotypes, the GRT population continues to be vilified—both blatantly and subtly—across mainstream media, public forums, and even police-run social media pages.

This is not simply about isolated comments or individual prejudice. This is systemic, deep-rooted, and actively harming lives.

Media Bias and Double Standards

The Daily Mail recently published a sensationalist article titled “Britain's traveller land-grabbing blitz revealed in new map.” It uses inflammatory language such as “illegal camps”, “land grabs”, and “invasions”, with no attempt to include a Traveller perspective or to address why so many families are forced to occupy land without permission in the first place. Councils routinely fail to meet their legal obligations to provide authorised sites, leaving families with no lawful place to stop.

In another example, Sky News covered the Appleby Horse Fair—Europe's largest gathering of Gypsies and Travellers—not to celebrate its cultural significance, but to criticise the aftermath of the event. The headline focused solely on rubbish left in fields, completely ignoring the thousands who attended peacefully, the centuries-old heritage of the event, or the reality that all large festivals result in clean-up operations. There is little to no mention of the Gypsy and Traveller families who stayed behind to support Billy Welch in the clean-up of Appleby, or of the significant contributions they made to the effort. In June 2023 alone, Gypsies and Travellers raised £24,000 to help fund the clean-up operation.

Compare this to the coverage of Glastonbury or Notting Hill Carnival, where litter is never weaponised against the culture of the attendees.

The message is clear: when Gypsies and Travellers gather, it's criminalised. When others do, it's celebrated.

It is evidently clear, that a chronic and very real shortage of pitches and sites to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers is causing real tensions and issues for all sectors of society, this often failure of policy and statutory requirement to supply sites must be addressed to meet everyone's needs and to ensure harmony between settled and travelling communities.

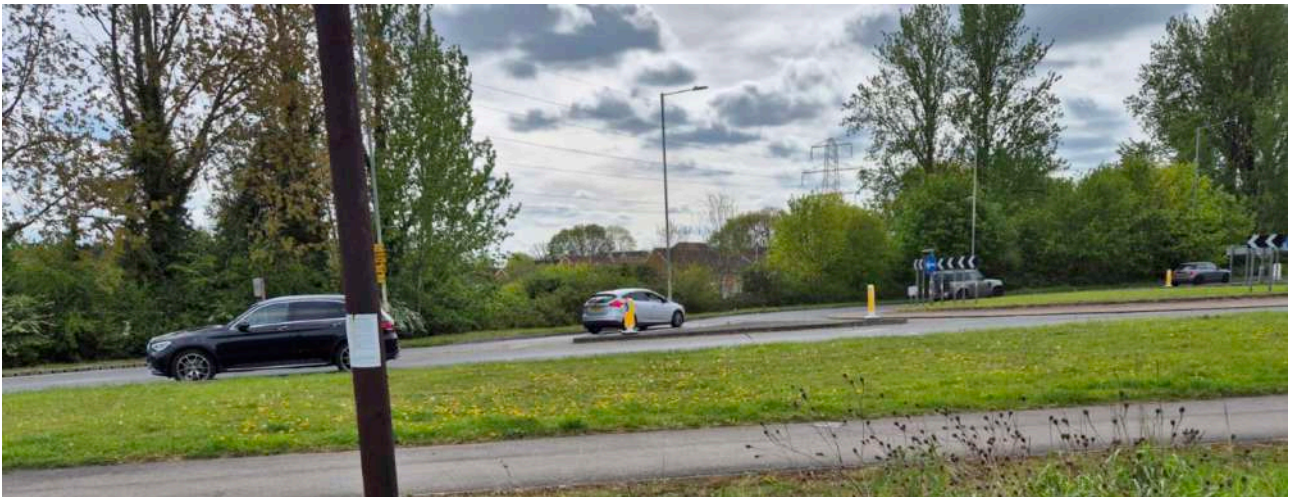
Highway Access Safety



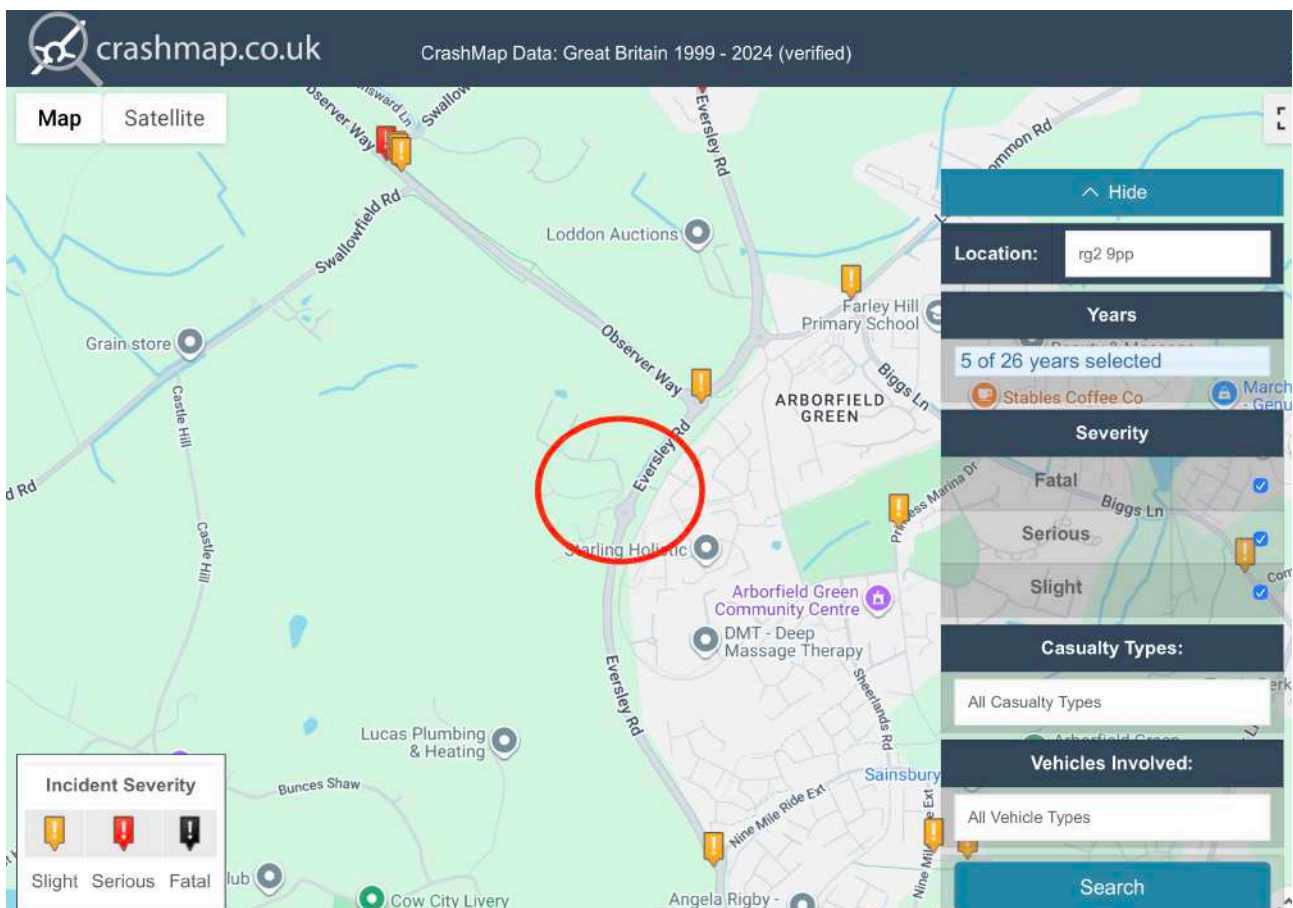
The site is accessed via a private lane with passing points and sufficient width to ensure all users are safe.

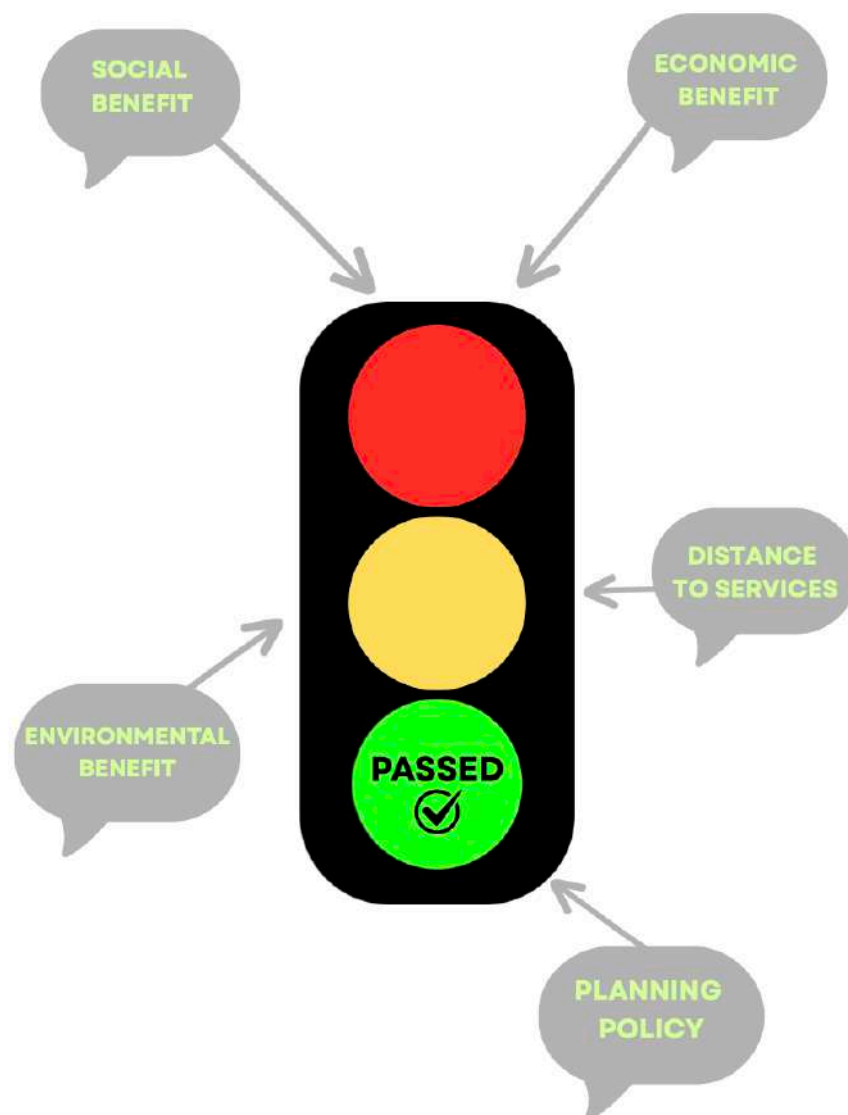
Where it meets the highway there is a roundabout and public footpath with crossings.





A search of the available online crash map data shows no recorded incidents or accidents at the junction and roundabout where the site access joins the local highways network.





Summary

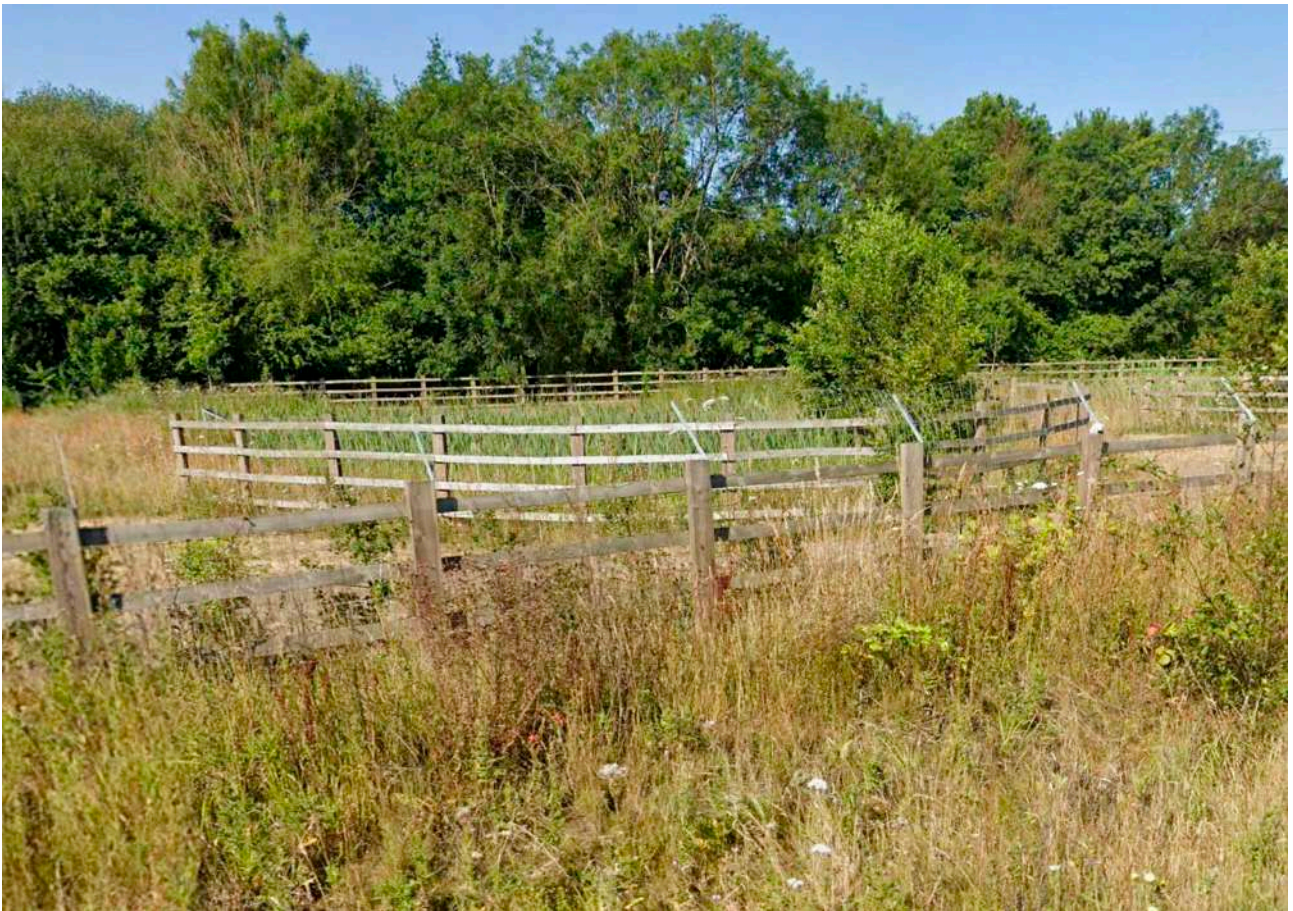
The applicants have nowhere else to go and will be forced to a roadside existence. I remind all parties of the Article 8 EHCR best interests of the Child, in denying them regular access to education and the health requirements of the applicants.

The benefits to the public are not confined to a personal or local nature and would secure benefits to the whole of the country and the tax paying public, by reducing tensions between communities, improving education standards, reducing costs from illegal encampments and in so far as is possible, reducing the likelihood of future offending and prison.

Character & Appearance

The site is largely unseen from the main road and public footpaths, as can be seen in the imagery below.







It is clear that inward views of the site are not present from long or medium range, and in terms of short range inward views, they are contained to the immediate vicinity of the private access lane only.

Therefore it is considered that no detriment to the character and appearance arises as a result of the application proposal.

Landscaping

As part of this application process, the applicants are prepared to accept a planning condition to secure an enhanced landscaping scheme for approval and discharge, which will address both soft and hard landscaping.

This will ensure that matters concerning such areas as external boundary treatments can be fully considered and the best solution delivered.

I show a typical enhanced landscape plan on the next page of this statement as a guide to the officer only.

Design Features

In addition to the existing screening which prevents inward views of the site, the applicant proposes that an appropriate planning condition be imposed in order to secure high quality external treatments of the static caravan and the day room.



Mobile Homes or Caravans can be designed and built with a range of external finishes and it is no longer a requirement that all caravans must be rough cast external treatments.

In areas where landscape and visual amenity receptors are sensitive to such matters, the Council can rightly impose conditions which seek to address and overcome any assessed negative impacts.

Examples of treatment and finish types.





What is evident from the images provided, that show different finishes to caravans, is that it is perfectly possible and achievable to design a caravan is sympathetic to the visual amenity and character of an area and will seamlessly integrate with the surroundings.

A suitable condition to secure the external finishes of the caravan is acceptable

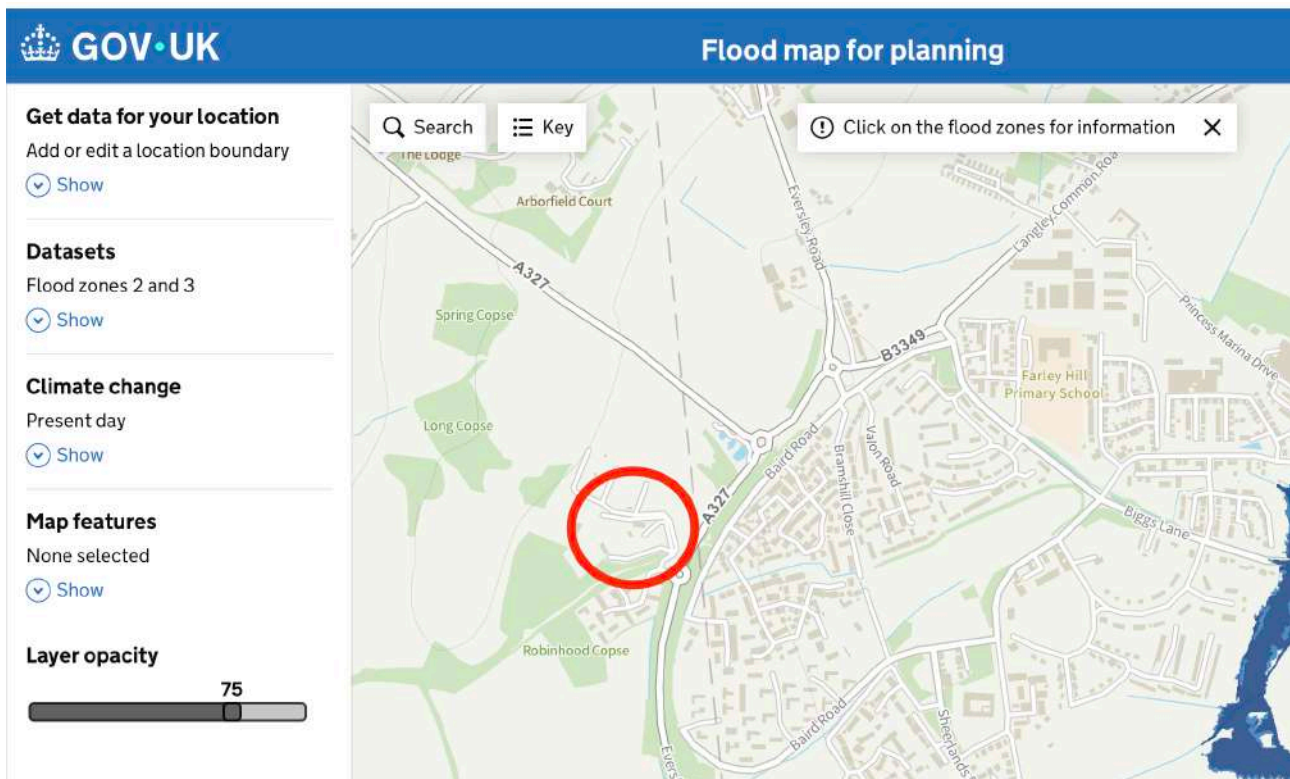


We have submitted with this application the Council's 2019 updated Landscape and Character Assessment, **Ref: PD22 & 23.**

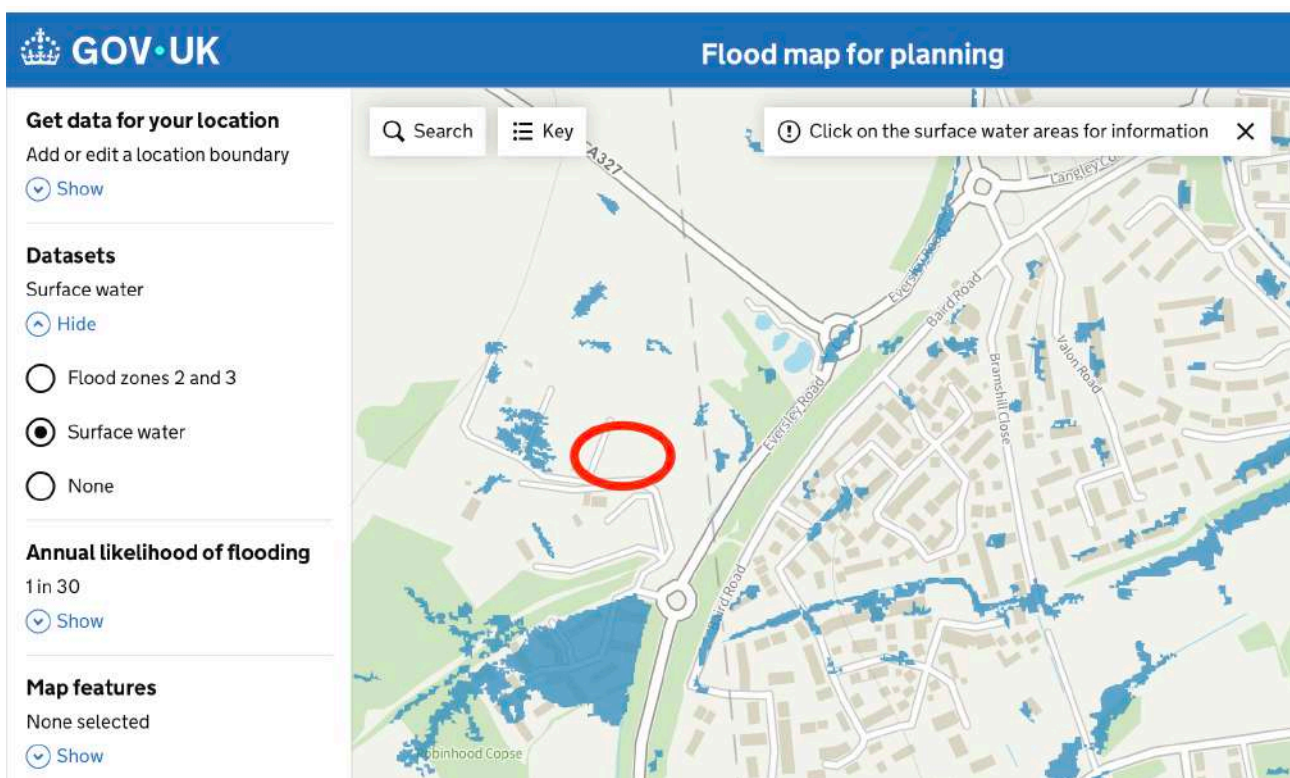
It is concluded that there are no conflicts with the Character and Appearance of the area arising from this proposal.

Flood Risk

A search of the Government's flood map for planning service shows the site to be wholly located within flood zone 1.



This includes surface water flooding



Surface Water Drainage

The applicant intends to deal with surface water by way of SuDS, ensuring that surface water runoff is managed by mimicking natural drainage processes, slowing the flows, enhancing water quality, and promoting infiltration.

Para 28 of the PPTS is relied upon by the applicants to secure the final detail and design in light of the Councils inability to demonstrate and up to date 5 year supply of sites.
Matters to be conditioned

28. If a local planning authority cannot demonstrate an up-to-date 5 year supply of deliverable sites, the provisions in paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework apply. Local planning authorities should consider how they could overcome planning objections to particular proposals using planning conditions or planning obligations including:

The applicants are willing and prepared to install and accept conditions for but not limited to;

- Permeable paving and driveways.
- Rainwater harvesting systems such as water butts on down pipes
- And all other measures to ensure compliance

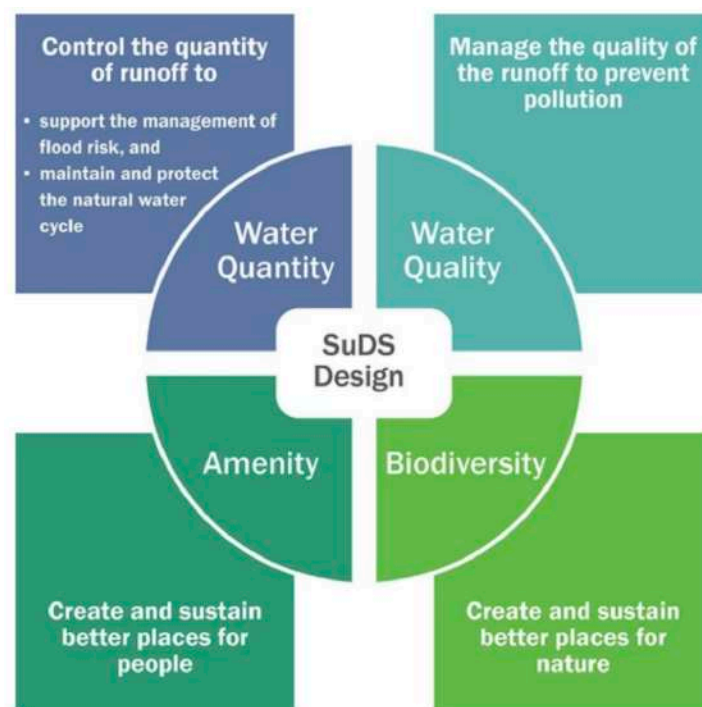


Figure 1: the four pillars of SuDS Design (CIRIA, 2015).

Foul Drainage

The applicants consider at this stage, that foul water waste will be dealt with by a package treatment plant, however, the final design and details will need to be determined following detailed ground drainage assessments and reporting and consider the reasonable and proportionate approach, is to secure this final design by planning condition to be discharged.

The report summarises that off site credits will need to be purchased to satisfy the 10% BNG requirement, the applicants are prepared to accept a suitable planning condition to secure this requirement.

Biodiversity Net Gain Report



4. Recommendations

4.1 Total Net Unit Change

The development proposals currently do not meet the recommended 10% net gain in biodiversity units. In order to meet the requirements of both national and local planning policy, the development is required to compensate for the loss of modified grassland and additionally provide a 10% biodiversity net gain.

Using the biodiversity metric, the current development proposal results in a net unit loss of 0.6812 units, which correlates to a -72.50% net change in habitat biodiversity. Additionally, the proposal doesn't meet the trading rules, as the loss of the existing neutral grassland and ruderal / ephemeral habitat is not compensated with habitats of equal or greater distinctiveness. Furthermore, the loss of mixed scrub is not compensated for with similar habitats within the same broad category, or habitats of greater distinctiveness.

4.2 Recommendations

As the majority of the proposed development footprint comprises artificial surfaces and hardstanding, there is limited opportunity for substantial habitat creation or enhancement within the red-line boundary. It is therefore likely that off-site measures will need to be sought in order to achieve net gain targets and satisfy trading rules. However, the proposed amenity green spaces may be used for some additional planting. To support compliance with the minimum 10% net gain requirement, the following habitat creation and enhancement measures are recommended:

Off-site creation/enhancement (blue line boundary)

Native Tree Planting

A minimum of six small-sized native broadleaved trees may be planted within the amenity green spaces. This will increase structural diversity and improve habitat connectivity across the site.

Species shall comprise locally appropriate native broadleaves (e.g. pedunculate oak, field maple, hawthorn or similar), unless otherwise agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Trees shall be planted as feathered or light standard stock with appropriate staking and protection.

A minimum five-year establishment period shall be provided, including watering during dry conditions, weed control, and replacement of any failures in the next planting season. Although limited in number, these trees will provide long-term ecological value as they mature, including nesting and shelter opportunities for birds, foraging habitat for bats and invertebrates, and increased canopy cover within the site.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Ecological Impact Assessment - Document Submission Ref: PD9

The full reports carried out by Eco 360 are submitted with the application.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

4.2.10 Japanese Knotweed

Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) was recorded along the western site boundary. Development activities have the potential to spread this species through the movement of contaminated soils and plant material. The proposed development therefore presents a low risk provided appropriate management measures are implemented.

4.3 Potential impacts of the works

Based upon the results from the desktop survey, field survey and using a degree of academic supposition, the uncompensated development impacts have been summarised as follows:

- Amphibians – **Low**
- Badgers – **Low**
- Bats – **Negligible**
- Birds – **Low**
- Flora – **Negligible**
- Hazel Dormouse – **Negligible**
- Invertebrates – **Low**
- Reptiles – **Low**
- Water Voles - **Negligible**
- White-clawed crayfish - **Negligible**

Ecological Impact Assessment

4.4 Ecological Impact Assessment

4.4.1 Ecological Feature Importance

Ecological Feature	Importance
Longmoor Bog SSSI/LNR	National
Bats	Local
Breeding Birds	Local
Reptiles	Local
Invertebrates	Site/Local
Amphibians	Site/Local
Habitats on Site	Site
Japanese Knotweed	Site

4.4.2 Assessment of Effects

Ecological Feature	Potential Effect	Mitigation/Control Measures	Residual Effect
Longmoor Bog SSSI/LNR	No direct impacts due to separation distance and absence of impact pathways	None required	Neutral
Amphibians	Minor risk during vegetation clearance	Precautionary working methods	Negligible
Bats	Potential disturbance from lighting	Sensitive lighting design and retention of commuting features	Negligible
Breeding Birds	Risk of disturbance or nest destruction during vegetation clearance	Timing restrictions and nesting bird checks	Negligible
Invertebrates	Loss of small areas of habitat	Wildflower planting and habitat enhancements	Minor Positive
Reptiles	Risk of injury during vegetation clearance	Precautionary vegetation clearance and ecological supervision where necessary	Negligible
Japanese Knotweed	Potential spread during construction	Appropriate management and biosecurity measures	Negligible
Ecological Feature	Potential Effect	Mitigation/Control Measures	Residual Effect
Habitats	Loss of low-value habitats	Landscaping and biodiversity enhancements	Minor Positive

4.4.3 Significance of Effects

The habitats present on-site are of limited ecological value and have largely been subject to recent clearance. No statutory or non-statutory designated sites occur within the development footprint and no evidence of protected species utilisation was identified during the survey.

The proposed development has the potential to result in minor impacts to common and widespread ecological receptors during the construction phase. However, the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined within Section 5 will reduce all effects to negligible levels.

Following implementation of the recommended mitigation and enhancement measures, no significant adverse ecological effects are anticipated.

Summary

There are no identified negative ecological impacts that affect the application proposal.

Suitable conditions can be imposed to secure measures such as bat sensitive lighting and other mitigation measures suggested by the Ecological Assessment.

Contamination - Document Submission Ref: PD8

A report prepared by Jaxx Engineering Consultancy consisting of 22 pages is submitted with the application.

11 CONCLUSIONS

11.1.1 The site would be classified as low to negligible risk. Due to the **low** chemical concentrations identified, any excavated material at this site may pose a '**low**' hazard to ground workers as far as Health and Safety is concerned. However, we would recommend that standard Health and Safety precautions be taken with regard to ground workers at this site. These should include PPE equipment such as gloves, overalls etc. to prevent prolonged dermal contact with the soils. Welfare facilities should be made available on-site by contractors to reduce extended contact with site soils. During the construction phase, the contractor should determine whether dust suppression measures are required as these will minimize potential inhalation of dust by neighbours or ground workers

11.1.2 Imported soils should be such that it will not present a hazard to users of the garden area and comply with BS 3882 and adhere to the Contaminated Land Exposure Assessment (CLEA) guidelines on determining the suitability of topsoil.

11.1.3 Garden areas should be provided with topsoil to a thickness of not less than 100mm.

11.1.4 Any upper ground excavated during the development of the site that cannot be reused on this site should be removed off-site to an appropriate waste disposal facility.

11.1.5 Old foundations, concrete bases and similar obstructions occurring within 300mm of the finished ground surface should be removed. Construction rubbish and debris should be removed from garden and other areas around the home

Any remedial requirement imposed by the Council can be secured planning condition.

Planning Balance

It is acknowledged that the application site sits outside of the settlement boundary in countryside, but it is not isolated and it is not located within Green Belt.

The application site is well screened by mature and dense hedging along with the topography of the land, ensures that the site sits well within its surroundings, that affords the site a large degree of visual protection from inward views.

I consider the provision of a 3 pitch family Gypsy/Traveller site in this location represents a suitable scale of development that respects the location and its attributes, whilst assisting to meet the immediate needs of the Councils 5 year supply of sites and the recognised policy failure in delivering new sites, and most importantly, the need of the applicant family and their dependant Children.

- A) The actual harm to countryside location and visual impacts upon the character of the area, being severely limited by the physical location, regard being given to the built structures in the locality, existing uses and the established hedging, fencing and vantage viewing points in to the application site, I consider **limited weight** should be afforded this matter in the overall balance, with the reduction in harm being offset against the need and policy failure.
- B) The application site is generally policy compliant, I judge that any remaining elements of policy conflict, attract **limited weight**.
- C) The applicant family's status as Gypsy/Traveller and their personal need for a site, attracts **significant weight**,
- D) The lack of alternative or available suitable pitches attracts **significant weight**.
- E) The evident need for Pitches within the District, both PPTS need and Cultural Need. I consider **significant weight** should be afforded to this matter.
- F) The lack of a 5-year supply of deliverable pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, both PPTS and Cultural, I consider **significant weight** should be attributed to this matter.
- G) The likely location of new sites within the District being in countryside or Green Belt locations, and the inevitability for new sites to be located outside of settlement boundaries. I consider that **moderate weight** should be afforded to the likely location of new sites.
- H) The best interests of the children of the Appellant. I consider that **substantial weight** should be afforded to this matter.
- I) The historical and ongoing policy failure of the Council, to this I consider **substantial weight** in favour of a permanent consent.

**The presumption in favour of sustainable planning tilt's
the planning balance in favour of granting consent
subject to planning conditions without delay.**

Granting the Application

It is submitted that the LPA will consider 3 suitable options should they be minded to grant planning permission,

Option 1 is considered the appropriate consent in this instance.

Option 1: Permanent Non-Personal Permission – The Council imposes a PPTS restricted Gypsy/ Traveller occupation condition on any grant of planning permission for the development. This would enable the development to contribute to the supply of the Councils Cultural and PPTS allocations, and occupied only by Gypsies and Travellers of Nomadic habits.

Option 2: Personal Permission – The Council imposes a condition requiring the cessation of the use and restoration of the land should the site cease to be occupied by the applicants, and their resident dependents. This would not enable the site to contribute to supply, but would address the personal needs of the applicants.

Option 3: Temporary Permission – In light of the personal circumstances of the appellant, and the absence of any available alternative sites, and the best interests of the children, the Council imposes a time restrictive condition setting out that the use of the site will cease in 5 years, or when the site cease to be occupied by the applicants, and their resident dependents, whichever happens sooner. This would provide much needed time for the applicants to consider alternative sites, and for the LPA to work towards making additional provision as is required.

Suggested Planning Conditions

As set out within this document, the Government has made expressly clear their intended direction of travel with regard to bringing forward all kinds of development, and as set out, Para 28 of the PPTS is clear that development which would otherwise be unacceptable, that can be made acceptable by planning condition, should be conditioned.

The applicant is prepared to accept conditions on the following matters and happy to consider any other matter should they arise during the consultation period/process;

Landscaping - Soft and Hard

Mandatory Bio Diversity Net Gain

External Finishes

Personal Consent and Gypsy/Traveller restriction

Lighting Details

Drainage and Foul Water Details

28. If a local planning authority cannot demonstrate an up-to-date 5 year supply of deliverable sites, the provisions in paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework apply. Local planning authorities should consider how they could overcome planning objections to particular proposals using planning conditions or planning obligations including: