

PLANNING REF : 261171
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Ampress Cottage
: Charlton Lane, Swallowfield, Berkshire
: RG7 1RT
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Charles Ian Fullerton
DATE SUBMITTED : 20/06/2026

COMMENTS:

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Planning Application 261171 for the change of use of land to a caravan site for the proposed erection of 5no. gypsy and traveller pitches, each incorporating a static caravan, touring caravan, single-storey day room, bin store, associated parking, access, boundary treatment, hardstanding and hard and soft landscaping.

I object to this planning application in the strongest possible terms. The Government's Policy Paper for traveller sites states that sites should be chosen that reduce the need for long distance travelling, avoid undue pressure on local infrastructure and services, and are not in a high flood risk area, especially given the vulnerability of caravans. This proposal would breach all those guidelines and should be rejected. My further grounds for objection are as follows:

Incompatibility: This application is fundamentally incompatible with Wokingham District's soon to be approved Local Plan and would damage the rural character of the countryside. It is not in keeping with the character of Swallowfield village and would result in urbanisation of the countryside which conflicts fundamentally with the purpose of the green belt.

This is an unacceptable request to site permanent housing (I.e static caravans) in an area which is clearly Green Belt land. Unlike three other nearby approved/pending building applications, each of which immediately abut established parts of Swallowfield Village, the proposed site is separated from the above by woodland to the north, east and (partially) west, and directly abuts farmland to the south.

The applicant's Planning Statement acknowledges that it would disrupt the tranquil character of the area to the detriment of visual

amenities. Therefore, compliance with Planning Policy TB10c is key to be achieved. This is a significant planning concern and demonstrates that the proposal conflicts with policies designed to protect the rural landscape and character of the area.

Infrastructure: Whilst issues with the provision of services for which a statutory body has responsibility (schooling, water & sewage, medical services) do not qualify as planning objections per se, the inability or unwillingness of such bodies to provide these services, at least in the short to medium term, should be considered in the light of their knock on effects recognising, moreover, that any travellers using the site, will suffer from the following disadvantages:

Schooling: At the time of planning application 230422, approved on appeal in July 2024, a survey revealed that, due to a lack of school places locally, up to 130 children from Swallowfield Parish required

daily transport to some 31 different schools, both inside and outside the borough. Two years on the situation hasn't materially changed. Therefore, with local planning applications approved and/or pending for more than 200 new homes, the council must expect to find places, in the near future, for at least another 200 children.

Practically speaking, this represents:

An unacceptable level of damage to the physical and mental health of children cooped up in one form of transport or another for typically well over an hour a day, thereby deprived of both social interaction with their peers and healthy physical activity.

A huge increase in vehicular traffic in and around Swallowfield, consisting of private cars, taxis and school buses of various sizes (remember the diversity of destinations to be served)

A monumental increase in the cost to the council of providing school transport for the many who will need it.

Health Service: Swallowfield Medical Practice is already well over its target limit of 15,000 patients (>17,000 two years ago), is unable to expand physically, and is already faced with the prospect of >400 new patients from pending local housing development. The Swallowfield demographic includes many elderly people who simply can't travel for medical treatment (the almost total lack of public transport is not an option) and for whom getting local appointments, often critical, is becoming steadily more difficult. Yes, the NHS has a responsibility to solve this problem, but there is currently no visibility of where or when this problem will be solved.

Public Transport Deficiencies: Because of the problems with schooling, health service, and the lack of a proper supermarket, capable of providing fresh fruit, vegetables, etc.), the almost non-existent public transport system, regularly threatened with complete closure, is a major handicap. In spring 2024, a survey of homes with school age children, established the need for >2.7 cars per family simply to meet normal domestic needs. Occupants of the proposed site would face all of the above challenges and need to travel significant distances, on a regular basis, in conflict with government policy.

Road infrastructure: The site is accessible only via 2 single track roads, currently authorised for travel at up to 60mph, which have no designated passing places and no refuges for non motor traffic using these lanes. These country lanes are used by a wide range of pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, children (both on foot and on cycle) and family pets. Having lost access to the fields either side of Trowes Lane, even more people will use these roads. The verges, soggy in winter and overgrown with stinging nettles much of the year, provide no refuge for such users. Use of these roads to transport

large vehicles such as static caravans, waste lorries, etc. not to mention the high volume of speeding motorists creates an unacceptable safety risk.

The proposed site has only a single access onto a busy road which bends away on each side of the entrance. Both access to and egress from the site, onto a busy, 60mph limit road, presents a hazard to both road users and residents, and a potential bottleneck for emergency vehicles.

Flooding: the site is bounded by major watercourses on two sides and (as acknowledged by the applicant) is prone to both groundwater and surface water flooding. While elevating the static caravans by 1m may protect them from flooding, it will not protect motor vehicles or pedestrians on the site from the negative impact of contaminated floodwaters. With the frequency of major local flooding on the increase, thanks to climate change, this site is both illogical and in conflict with government policy.

Water and sewerage: Because of the lack of services within 300m of the site, both fresh water and waste water will need to be delivered to/removed from the site using large tankers which will further prejudice safety and congestion on Trowes Lane and/or Charlton Lane. Illicit dumping of sewage in the adjacent watercourse would risk an environmental catastrophe.

In summary, this is an ill conceived and wholly unjustified attempt by the applicant to rush through a proposal which is unworkable in practice and in direct conflict with a host of government policies. It attempts to leverage the perceived shortfall in land for travellers sites within Wokingham Borough despite the fact that current sites are under utilised and the updated Local Plan, expected to be approved shortly, will fulfill the statutory requirement to provide 5 years worth of land for travellers pitches.

I respectfully request that, based on established government policies and common sense, this application should be REFUSED!

C.I. & C. Fullerton
19th June 2026