

PLANNING REF : 252782  
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Old Bath Road  
:  
: RG10 9QN  
SUBMITTED BY : Miss Victoria Robinson-Hoare  
DATE SUBMITTED : 02/12/2025

COMMENTS:

Formal Objection to Planning Application: Proposed Fuel Depot, Old Bath Road

I wish to register my strongest objection to the proposed fuel depot on Old Bath Road. The scale, location, and nature of this development present unacceptable risks to public safety, the environment, and the character of our community. This application is fundamentally inappropriate for a residential area and should be rejected in full.

1. Completely Unsuitable Industrial Fuel Storage Adjacent to Homes and a Nature Reserve

The proposal involves storing over 837,000 litres of hazardous fuel, including 711 tonnes of kerosene, diesel, heating oil, gas oil, and hybrid vegetable oil. Despite being presented as a local business, this is undeniably an industrial-scale operation.

Locating such a facility on the edge of a residential village and directly beside the River Loddon nature reserve is irresponsible and unsafe. The proximity to homes, schools, walking routes, and sensitive habitats makes the risk entirely unacceptable.

2. Severe and Dangerous Traffic Impacts on Old Bath Road

The application predicts 132 vehicle movements per weekday, including 59 HGVs and articulated lorries some up to 42 tonnes. This volume is wholly incompatible with a narrow road already struggling with congestion.

The turning manoeuvres required for these vehicles force lorries into the oncoming carriageway, particularly at a bend an issue already visible in site photographs. This is not hypothetical risk; it is an inevitable collision hazard.

Existing problems caused by parked delivery vehicles at the neighbouring tyre depot already compromise visibility and create choke points. Old Bath Road is used daily by schoolchildren, pedestrians, cyclists, and commuters. Introducing heavy fuel tankers would dramatically increase the likelihood of serious accidents.

3. Significant Environmental and Flooding Risks

The site is located on made ground with known instability and lies in an area prone to flooding due to a high water table. Developing a

fuel depot on such land is reckless.

Of particular concern is the proposal to discharge surface water and treated sewage directly into the River Loddon, a designated nature reserve. This river and its adjoining lakes support rich biodiversity and should not become a drainage outlet for an industrial facility.

Any leakage or runoff inevitable over time would cause catastrophic ecological damage to the river system and surrounding habitats.

#### 4. Misleading Biodiversity Claims and Evidence of Structural Unsuitability

The developers claim a 14% biodiversity net gain, largely based on planting six trees and some shrubs. This is not a credible or meaningful enhancement and appears designed solely to satisfy minimum planning requirements.

Furthermore, to counteract the unstable ground conditions, the proposal includes surrounding the site with concrete block retaining walls and limestone-filled gabions. This is effectively an admission that the land is unsuitable for this type of facility.

#### 5. Conflict with Local Character, Planning Policy, and Public Trust

Twyford and Charvil are established residential communities, not industrial corridors. Installing a large-scale fuel storage depot would permanently damage the character and safety of the area.

There is also growing community concern about the advice reportedly given to the applicant by Wokingham Borough Council officers. This raises important questions about impartiality and transparency in the planning process. Approving this application would represent a clear failure of the Council's duty to residents, to environmental stewardship, and to planning integrity.

#### Conclusion

This application is indefensible. It introduces substantial risks

- to:
- public safety,
  - environmental and ecological health,
  - flood resilience,
  - traffic safety, and
  - the wellbeing and character of the local community.

The combination of heavy fuel storage, dangerous traffic movements, unstable ground, and proximity to sensitive habitats makes this proposal wholly unsuitable for its location.

I urge the planning committee to reject the application unequivocally and act to protect the safety, integrity, and

environmental value of our village and its surroundings

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