

9 APR 2026

GROUND'S FOR OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION 260439, RG40 3NR

I believe that this Application should be refused on the grounds of inappropriate location, lack of sustainability, environmental damage, loss of amenity to local residents and the danger it poses to users of Range Road and the adjacent main roads.

LOCATION

The Site is located on Range Road (the Lane) which is a quiet unadopted unmade road through field and woodland. It is 'a slice of paradise' for many local residents who walk their children and dogs off the leash and enjoy the birdsong, the deer and the muddy puddles. The Site is in fact on land designated as Countryside in the Council's Core Strategy (CS) and Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan (FNP).

The Core Strategy (CS) at paragraphs 3.11 and 3.12 gives the core principals of development on such land, but these are not met: there is no repurposing of buildings, new buildings will be erected and there is no proposal for revitalisation of local services.

Lack of utilities:

- There is no mains water on the Lane; water is brought to each house by private pipe.
- The electricity supply to the Lane is limited by the width of the cable. Also the poles for those cables do not extend to the Site.
- There is no gas and no mains sewerage.
- There are no service strips on the Lane.
- Houses already in situ have water pipes and electricity cables serving them with permission for the installation thereof granted at the time of the initial development to the Lane, the owner of the Lane is now unknown and it is therefore not possible for utility companies to acquire lawful consent to install further utilities.
- The Council have stated that they are unable to adopt the Lane due to its lack of drainage and service strips.
- There is no provision in the Proposal for how connection to services would be managed.

Planning, Design and Access Statement (the Statement)

Paragraph 5.18: Trees on and around the Site were felled in October 2025. There is now no screening of the Site contrary to the Statement. The Site is downhill from the properties it borders on the Nine Mile Ride making screening impossible. This also conflicts with The Managing Development Delivery (the MDD), policy TB10 impacting on the separate identity of settlements.



Figure 1: This the view from the Lane, with the cleared trees heaped at the far edge.

Paragraph 5.20 states that the proposed development of the Site 'complies with policies CP1 and CP3 and is acceptable to the character of the area'. This is purely subjective and I would disagree entirely. The Lane itself is comprised of five attractive houses on large and leafy plots, interspersed with areas of woodland. An area of caravans would be totally out of keeping with the attractive nature of the Lane. There are in fact express covenants contained in the titles of the properties on the Lane against the use on the land for a caravan or house on wheels intended as a dwelling.

SUSTAINABILITY AND SCALE

Distance to amenities: The amenities of the area including public transport, shops, doctors and schools are **not within usual walking distance and therefore do not support sustainability** contrary to **CP2**. Indeed, the Lane is often extremely muddy and therefore aside from the distance, it is difficult to walk to work or school unless a change of clothes and footwear is taken. There is no cycle storage provision within the Proposal and I feel it is safe to assume that the main mode of transport will be private car.

Factor 11 of CP1: there is no provision for alternative transport use, rather the Site Plan has provision for two parking spaces and a touring caravan on a large area of

permeable hard standing. The hard standing area proposed could accommodate a far larger number of caravans and cars.

The Application does not make clear how many people would live on the Site; none of the submitted plans show how many bedrooms there would be. Once there is residential user of the Site, having more touring caravans on the Site would **amount to permitted development for which no further planning consent would be required and so those two cars may soon be many cars, with other pollutants increasing also.**

SCALE

- There are five houses on the Lane.
- There is an **unauthorised Gypsy settlement (currently invalid application 260577)**. This is opposite the Site. It has one pitch consisting of a static and a touring caravan. The success of this Application would count in its favour.
- There is at least one other plot on the Lane owned by the applicant (other plots may have been purchased).
- It is usual for Gypsy plots to be given permission to expand once initial planning permission is granted.
- The proposed size of the hard standing could accommodate many more cars and caravans than contained in the Proposal.
- The addition of more touring caravans would fall within permitted user if the Application were granted and no further planning consent would be necessary.
- The number of caravans would very soon outnumber the houses on the Lane, further changing the character of the area to the detriment of current local inhabitants and increasing the intensity of unsuitable traffic along the Lane.
- Cumulatively the Proposal is therefore disproportionate to the scale of existing settlement on the Lane.

17 percent of Traveller and Gypsy pitches in the Borough are in Finchampstead, while Finchampstead only accounts for 10 per cent of the land mass of the Borough. Any further Gypsy and Traveller pitches in Finchampstead would be disproportionate to the scale of existing settlement in Finchampstead.

Conflict of separate settlements – the unauthorised development

- The unauthorised development coincided with this Application.
- The Gypsies on the unauthorised site utilised the Site for turning their caravans onto their site, seemingly with the permission of the Applicant.

- The same personnel are regularly seen going between the two sites.
- Much damage was done to the Lane when the unauthorised site was developed and distress was caused to local residents, with the police and council deeming it unsafe for themselves or residents to approach.
- The residents of the unauthorised site have firstly abstracted water from a private supply pipe running through their site and secondly laid cables under the Lane to abstract electricity. The first causes danger of contamination of supply and disruption of supply to the owner of the pipe (who will also be paying for their water usage as it is metered) and the second causes danger to anyone using the Lane; the Lane is unmade and its depth regularly changes with rainfall.
- The unauthorised site is floodlit every night causing distress and confusion in the wildlife including bats and deer (which are now wandering lost onto the Nine Mile Ride), and nuisance to local residents.
- There is concern among local residents, that while the Applicant has made a proper application for planning on the Site, this is perhaps only because of the extant Enforcement Order on the land and that in any case, if planning were to be granted, he may show the same level of respect to the environment and local residents as his acquaintances on the other side of the Lane.
- **This is likely to bring the separate settlements into conflict.**

ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE

The Site does not meet the criteria of the Core Principles (CP) of the CS as set out in CP1; the Development is not sustainable.

- The Site forms a part of the **Special Protection Area (SPA)**
- The Proposal does not maintain or enhance the environment; the woodland on the Site was cleared to make way for the proposed development in October 2025 and with it habitat for many animals. See Figure 1 above.
- No provision for additional planting suggesting no commitment to biodiversity.
- No provision for the minimisation of emission of pollutants or of adverse effects on ground water or adequate drainage. Provisions are included for a **soakaway**, itself a risk to the SPA and there is no existing mains drainage.
- Provision for a large area of hard standing meaning water (likely to contain oil and other pollutants) from the Site will run off down the Lane and into Silverstock Bog, which in itself supports much varied wildlife, again adversely affecting the SPA.

Biodiversity

Paragraphs 5.27 and 5.28 of the Statement are disingenuous when saying the layout of the Site “allows for the healthy retention of all of the trees on the site itself” and “the implementation of the proposal does not lead to the requirement to prune any of the retained trees”; since the clearing of the Site there are very few trees remaining to be retained or pruned. Please see attached photograph Figure 1. I suggest that the proposed hard standing which will prevent the regeneration of the trees already cleared, together with the deliberate clearance of the Site prior to the Proposal, is **unacceptable in arboricultural terms**.

Paragraphs 5.35 and 6.4 of the Statement claim that there will be biodiversity gains; this is hard to reconcile with the clearance of the Site that until recently had abundant woodland cover and wildlife. Owls, bats, snakes, sloe worms and amphibians are common in the area. There was a large amount of Buddleia, also known as Butterfly Bush, which in summer was covered in butterflies and bees. This was destroyed. The loss of habitat and further loss occasioned by any development puts that wildlife under pressure.

Please note that the Biodiversity study referred to in the Statement was carried out before the clearance of the Site, and even so, it admits that there will a loss in biodiversity should the Application succeed. I fail to see how the applicant will “utilise land within their control” for the purposes of biodiversity; it is already woodland and a couple of bat boxes is not going to make up for what has already been lost when the Site was cleared– or what it would return to if the Site were not developed.

Paragraph 5.42 of the Statement, the applicant offers to enter into a legal agreement to provide financial contribution to mitigate the introduction of a residential pitch. Such contribution will however not mitigate the loss of amenity to the locality or its wildlife. Additionally, this is offered mitigation for one pitch; will there be further payments for further caravans?

THE LANE – DANGER TO ROAD USERS AND LOSS OF AMENITY

The Lane is a narrow single track, unmade and unadopted Byway. The width of the Lane makes it impossible to bring a full size static caravan onto the Site without substantially widening the Lane and damaging trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders. The Lane is only 2.8m at the entrance while a standard static caravan measures between 3 – 3.6m with larger models up to 4.27m. There is a mature oak tree at the top of the Lane with a TPO which curtails the Lane’s width and it was demonstrated when the Gypsies from the unauthorised site tried and failed to bring a full sized static caravan onto that site,

that it cannot be done, despite having widened the Lane a few days previously to bring a smaller model in. Please see attached photographs both of the stuck caravan (Figure 2) and oak tree (Figure 3).



Figure 2



Figure 3

- **There are no separate footways** on the Lane which makes it difficult for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders to get out of the way of traffic. This has not been a problem in the past as traffic has been minimal, but increased development and the understanding that permission for one pitch may lead to permission for many more, **will increase the intensity of traffic and danger to current users.**
- **No refuge for pedestrians** The damage occasioned to the Lane by the mode of the arrival of the Gypsies on the unauthorised site; the Lane was not wide enough even for their smaller static caravan and they therefore brought in a digger to widen it. In so doing they knocked down trees and heaped the verge high with soil, trees and other debris. Parts of the verge are now totally inaccessible.



Figure 4 The damaged verge

- **No street lighting** on the Lane and together with the tree coverage, this makes it extremely dark at night; dog walkers frequently walk down the Lane after dark and **increased traffic and lack of refuge will put them in particular danger.**
- **Adjoining footpaths** - Should the application be successful, pedestrian access will be precluded not only to the Lane, but also to adjoining footpaths. The Lane forms a part of a popular circuit comprising of the Lane, footpath FINC51 and Byway FINC42. Access and amenity of these routes will therefore be lost if the Lane becomes dangerous to non vehicular traffic.

It is understood that consent for this Application is likely to lead to a substantial increase in intensity of car and van use as well as oversized vehicles such as caravans.

Danger to other car users:

- The Lane is narrow and single track; it was not designed for high use.
- The exit from the Lane onto the Nine Mile Ride is perilous due to heavy traffic and **very restricted sight lines.**
- It is only possible to see the length of a car and a half from the top of the Lane to the right and it is necessary to approach the main road very slowly as it is also difficult to see and be seen by pedestrians due to the upward slope of the Lane.
- Personally, when taking my children to school, I am adamant that we have to leave by 7.40am, otherwise it is impossible to get out of the Lane without risking accident.
- While the sight lines onto the Sandhurst Road are better, it has a speed limit of 50mph and is again busy. In addition, the road and Lane are often flooded at that end and the local amenities are in the other direction.

Entering the Lane from the road is also hazardous:

- It is not possible to see what is coming before manoeuvring on to the Lane, by which stage you are committed.
- If there is a vehicle coming up the Lane, this either results in a long and difficult reverse down the Lane or if the oncoming vehicle cannot reverse (as in caravans and trailers), the car entering the Lane must reverse back out on to the main road, which is not only dangerous but illegal.

No designated passing places:

- Passing is only possible by pulling into private driveways.
- An increase in development and traffic will make this common place and be very much to the detriment of current residents and no doubt cause acrimony between road users.
- In addition, **the driveways of the houses** on the Lane were not constructed with high traffic usage in mind. It is impossible to see if anything is coming on the Lane before in part turning onto it from the driveways.

The Proposal therefore rather than improving facilities for pedestrians and cyclists or enhancing road safety, would lead to a higher intensity of vehicular use and cause highway problems, lead to traffic related environmental problems and endanger pedestrians and cyclists.

A previous application for planning permission was made for the Site in 2006. As I understand it, the main ground for its refusal was the danger posed by the access on to the main roads. This danger has only become worse with the increase in traffic in the locality, consequent to new developments in Arborfield. These problems have not been addressed in the Statement.

In conclusion, there are numerous problems with the Proposal from Location to loss of amenity and biodiversity to dangers to the environment and road users. These have not been properly addressed in the Proposal or Statement; indeed they are not problems that can be overcome in a development of this nature. Therefore I ask that you refuse this Application.

Signed



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