

PLANNING REF: 252782

SUBMITTED BY: Virginia Wakefield

PROPERTY ADDRESS:

DATE SUBMITTED: 08.12.2025

COMMENTS:

I am writing to lodge an objection to planning application 252782 concerning the proposed fuel storage and distribution depot at the former Prince Brothers service station on Old Bath Road, Charvil.

1. Immediate proximity to Charvil Country Park and sensitive ecological areas

The site borders Charvil Country Park and the Old River Loddon, both of which support valuable and protected habitats. A large-scale industrial fuel depot—bringing noise, lighting, emissions and frequent HGV traffic—is wholly incompatible with the nature conservation and recreational purpose of this area.

The applicant's suggested biodiversity "net gain" measures fall far short of mitigating the significant risks inherent in storing close to a million litres of fuel directly beside a nature reserve.

2. Pollution hazards and the site's high flood risk

The location is within a recognised floodplain and has repeatedly suffered serious flooding, most recently in 2014 and 2024. Floodwaters have previously reached the boundary of the site and are reported to have entered parts of the former building.

Storing such large quantities of fuel in a highly flood-prone area creates an unacceptable contamination threat to the Old River Loddon, the lakes within Charvil Country Park, the River Thames and local groundwater. In a flood, any spill or structural failure would be impossible to contain, with the potential for long-lasting environmental damage. With climate change increasing the likelihood of severe flooding, this risk cannot be justified.

3. Public health, safety and fire risk

Major accidents at other fuel-storage facilities illustrate the real dangers of pollution, fire and toxic fumes. The proposal would introduce a constant hazard to nearby residents, park visitors and users of local footpaths. Existing concerns about unsafe HGV manoeuvres in the area—such as those previously associated with Denmark House—would be amplified.

4. Highway safety and inadequate road conditions

Old Bath Road is narrow, has poor visibility and is heavily used by pedestrians and cyclists, including many schoolchildren travelling between Charvil and Twyford. The forecast number of tanker journeys (59 articulated tankers each week, in addition to cars, vans and weekend operations) is entirely unsuitable for this road and would significantly increase the likelihood of serious accidents. Road wear would also accelerate, despite recent resurfacing.

5. Noise, disturbance and impact on neighbouring residents

The proposed operating hours of 5am to 6pm, seven days a week, represent a substantial intensification compared with previous use of the site. Noise and disturbance at these levels conflict with CP3 and NPPF 185, and would diminish local residential amenity as well as the tranquillity of nearby green spaces.

6. Unsuitable land use and concerns regarding past conduct

A fuel depot is an industrial use that is fundamentally inappropriate for a location immediately adjoining more than 1,000 homes, a nature reserve and public recreational land. The applicant has failed to demonstrate a need for this specific site or to show that more appropriate industrial land is not available.

It is also troubling that the operator carried out fuel-depot activities on this site in December 2024 without planning permission or the required licences. This unauthorised use created safety issues and disturbance, and suggests a worrying disregard for regulatory obligations. Such behaviour raises legitimate doubts about the operator's reliability and their ability to run a high-risk facility safely.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that planning application 252782 be refused.