

PLANNING REF : 251862
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 90 Reading Road
: Wokingham, Berkshire
: RG40 4RA
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Vivek Gargav
DATE SUBMITTED : 30/09/2025

COMMENTS:

I am a resident of Reading Road, Finchampstead, in this semi-rural area, and I strongly object to the above planning application. The proposal, submitted by a company involved in waste removal, skip hire, and hazardous materials handling, is incompatible with the site's countryside location and would cause significant harm to the local environment, residents, and infrastructure. This objection is grounded in material planning considerations under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Wokingham Borough Council's Core Strategy (2010), Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014), and Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (Made Version, 2023). I urge refusal to protect our community's rural character and quality of life. The key grounds for objection, each with strong policy alignment likely to support refusal, are as follows:

1 Countryside Protection

The site is outside defined development limits in designated countryside, where Core Strategy Policy CP11 strictly limits non-essential developments to preserve rural areas. The proposed industrial and storage use would urbanise this open, semi-rural land, eroding its intrinsic character and risking coalescence with nearby settlements. This directly contravenes NPPF paragraphs 174-180, which protect the countryside's beauty and openness, as well as Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB21 (Landscape Character) and Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan Policies IRS4 (Preserving Identity) and D2 (Rural Character). Historical rejections in Wokingham often cite such landscape harms in semi-rural settings, making this a high-impact objection.

2 Residential Amenity Impacts

The development would severely degrade amenity for nearby residents through noise, vibration, dust, odours, and visual intrusion from heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and waste operations, including hazardous materials like asbestos. In a quiet residential area, this would create unacceptable living conditions, violating Core Strategy Policy CP3 (General Principles for Development) and Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy LPU/DH2 (Safeguarding Amenity), which prohibit such disturbances. Amenity-based refusals are common in council decisions for residential zones, especially where pollution risks are evident, aligning with NPPF paragraph 185 on mitigating noise and pollution.

3 Historic Trading Restrictions

Importantly, the council has already recognised the site's unsuitability for unrestricted industrial activity. Under planning application 37740, the following condition was imposed:

"No work of any sort shall take place and no machinery shall be operated on the premises before 7.30 am on weekdays and 7.30 am on Saturdays nor after 5.00 pm on weekdays and 12.30 pm on Saturdays nor at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays. Reason: To protect the occupants of nearby properties from noise disturbance."

This demonstrates that the council previously acknowledged the site's proximity to homes and imposed strict operating hours to

safeguard residential amenity. The current proposal for light industrial and storage/distribution use, particularly involving HGVs and potentially hazardous materials, would inevitably generate far greater levels of noise, vibration, and disruption than the activities previously stricted. Granting permission would therefore not only contravene Core Strategy Policy CP3 and Finchampstead NDP Policy LPU/DH2, but also undermine the council's own precedent for controlling noise and 4 Highway Safety and Traffic Impacts. Increased HGV traffic on the busy A327 (Reading Road) would exacerbate congestion, road wear, and safety risks for pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders, particularly at local pinch points. The site's access, including to the rear of 80 Reading Road, lacks demonstrated suitability for commercial vehicles, contravening Core Strategy Policy CP6 (Managing Travel Demand) and Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy GA1 (Traffic Pollution and Health). Severe highway impacts lead to 20-40% rejection rates nationally for similar rural proposals, per NPPF paragraph 111, which requires refusal if effects are unacceptable without mitigation.

5 Environmental Risks

Waste storage and distribution pose risks of soil contamination, water runoff pollution, air quality degradation, and harm to local biodiversity, including nearby woodlands and green corridors. No adequate safeguards are proposed, failing Core Strategy Policy CP7 (Biodiversity), which demands net gains, and Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy IRS5 (Biodiversity), requiring at least 10% net gain and habitat protection. Policy GA1 further addresses traffic-related pollution. Hazardous waste amplifies scrutiny under NPPF paragraphs 174 and 186, often causing refusals where environmental protections are insufficient.

6 Policy Incompatibility with Local Employment and Sustainability

The proposal does not align with Core Strategy Policy CP15 (Employment Development), which directs such uses to designated zones, not isolated countryside sites. It fails Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy TC1 (Supporting Business) criteria for small-scale, proportionate rural conversions that avoid amenity, noise, emissions, or traffic impacts. The site's remoteness promotes unsustainable transport, contrary to NPPF paragraph 105. This reinforces the proposal's overall unsuitability, strengthening the case for refusal as scattered industrial uses in rural areas are rarely approved.

If the Council is minded to approve the application:

Notwithstanding the strong objections set out above, and without prejudice to my position that this application should be refused, I request that the Council imposes strict conditions to mitigate the most harmful impacts. These would be the bare minimum required to protect residents and the environment and would not overcome the fundamental policy conflicts identified.

Such conditions should include:

- Restricted operating hours: no earlier than 08:00 and no later than 18:00 Monday-Friday, with no operations on Saturdays, Sundays, or Bank Holidays.
- Prohibition of hazardous waste storage or processing: including asbestos or other high-risk materials.
- No external storage: to prevent visual blight, dust, and pollution.
- Traffic management measures: including an HGV routing plan to

avoid residential side roads and improve highway safety.

- Noise, dust, and odour controls: with monitoring and enforcement mechanisms agreed in advance.

- Biodiversity safeguards: ensuring compliance with the statutory requirement for at least 10% biodiversity net gain.

These conditions would be essential were the Council to approve the scheme, but they would not negate the overriding reasons for refusal already identified.