

FULL PLANNING APPROVAL **DRAFT DECISION NOTICE**



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Expiry Date: 10 July 2026

Application Number: 260737

Location: Land Off Eversley Road, adjacent to Highfield Park, Arborfield, Berkshire

Proposal: Full application for the proposed change of use of land for the stationing of 1 no. static caravan for occupation by Gypsies / Travellers with associated access and landscaping works.

Recommendation: Refused

Reasons

1. The proposed development represents an unjustified form of residential accommodation within the open countryside, outside any defined settlement boundaries. The site does not fall within any exception for development set out in CP11 and is not suitably related to an existing settlement. As such, the proposal conflicts with the spatial strategy and would constitute inappropriate development in the countryside. While the proposal would make a limited contribution towards the Borough's identified need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation the shortfall is not acute and no site specific or personal circumstances have been advanced to justify a departure from policy. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CP1, CP2 and CP11 of the Core Strategy, Policy TB10 of the Managing Development Delivery DPD, Emerging Policy H10 of the Local Plan Update, and the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2024.

2. The site is located in an unsustainable location, remote from day to day services and facilities, and is not served by safe or suitable pedestrian and cycle infrastructure. Future occupiers would be heavily reliant on the private motor vehicle for all journeys, resulting in an unsustainable pattern of development. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CP1, CP4, CP6 and CP9 of the Core Strategy, and the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

3. The proposal fails to demonstrate an efficient and effective use of the site, when taken both singly [and cumulatively] with the associated access arrangements and site constraints. The development is reliant on a shared access across a number of planning application of varying design and standard, incorporating sections that differ in width, construction, and functionality, which has not been shown to operate cohesively or safely as part of a unified scheme. This fragmented approach to access provision, when combined with the overall layout and disposition of development, results in a piecemeal form of development. The cumulative effect including the reliance on substandard and inconsistent access arrangements and the absence of a comprehensive, well-integrated layout, gives rise to an inefficient

pattern of development would unnecessarily constrain the future use and capacity of the land. The proposal represents a suboptimal and poorly coordinated use of a finite land resource, failing to make the best use of the site in a manner proportionate to its context and constraints. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. The proposal would result in the encroachment of built and domestic form into the open countryside, including hardstanding, access works, and residential paraphernalia, giving rise to an urbanising effect that would erode the intrinsic character and appearance of the rural area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 of the Core Strategy, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. The proposed development, by reason of its scale, layout and lack of a coherent design response, together with insufficient information regarding impacts on existing trees, hedgerows and vegetation, would fail to conserve or enhance the character and appearance of the landscape. The site lies within Landscape Character Areas L2 (Farley Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills) and J2 (Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay), where the prevailing rural character is defined by an open pastoral landscape, strong field patterns, woodland and hedgerow structure, and a dispersed settlement form. The proposal would result in the urbanisation and loss of fields, paddocks and green infrastructure, eroding these defining characteristics and undermining the function of the site as part of an important landscape buffer separating Arborfield Garrison from the wider countryside, leading to cumulative encroachment and suburbanisation. In addition, the development would harm the character, function and visual amenity of the adjacent Green Route Enhancement Area through the introduction of built form and domestication. The proposal therefore represents a visually intrusive development that would cause unacceptable harm to landscape character, contrary to Policies CP1, CP3, CP9 and CP11 of the Core Strategy, Policies CC02, CC03 and TB21 of the Managing Development Delivery DPD, Policies IR2, AD1 and AD3 of the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan, the Borough Design Guide SPD, the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the proposed development would not result in unacceptable harm to existing trees within and adjacent to the site, including those protected by Tree Preservation Order No. 2015/2026. No tree survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Tree Protection Plan or Arboricultural Method Statement has been provided to identify the extent, quality and category of the existing tree resource, the likely impacts of the development upon those trees, or the measures necessary to secure their retention and protection. Furthermore, the submitted site layout fails to identify any existing trees and therefore indicates that the development may necessitate the removal of all trees within the site, including protected trees. In the absence of this information, the Local Planning Authority cannot establish whether the development would adversely affect trees which make a positive contribution to the character, appearance and visual amenity of the area, nor whether appropriate avoidance, retention, protection, replacement or mitigation measures could be secured. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy, Policy CC03 of the Managing Development Delivery DPD, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the proposed access arrangements would provide a safe and suitable means of access for all users. The application fails to demonstrate that appropriate site access, having regard to the nature of the adjoining highway and likely vehicle speeds, nor does it provide sufficient detail regarding the geometry, visibility, width and construction of the access to

confirm that it can safely accommodate the expected vehicle movements,

including service and emergency vehicles. There is no evidence or swept path analysis, to demonstrate that vehicles can safely enter, manoeuvre within, and exit the site in a forward gear. The development

is reliant on a shared access of varying design and standard, incorporating sections that differ in width, construction, and functionality, which has not been shown to operate cohesively or safely as part of a unified scheme. The access relies on a culvert crossing, and insufficient information has been provided regarding its

structural capacity, condition, and ability to accommodate the increase in vehicular loading, or to ensure that it would remain safe,

functional, and resilient in flood conditions. In the absence of this information, the Local Planning Authority cannot be satisfied that the

development would not result in unacceptable impacts on highway safety

or the efficient operation of the local highway network. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CP6 of the Core Strategy, Policy CC07 of the Managing Development Delivery DPD and the National Planning Policy Framework.

8. In the absence of adequate ecological survey information, including a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and any necessary protected species surveys, the Local Planning Authority cannot assess the likely effects of the development on biodiversity, protected species or habitats. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy, Policy TB23 of the Managing Development Delivery DPD, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. The submitted information fails to demonstrate, through an appropriate and robust biodiversity metric, that the development would achieve the required minimum 10% biodiversity net gain. The proposal is therefore contrary to the Environment Act 2021 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

10. In the absence of a planning obligation to secure suitable avoidance and mitigation measures and access management monitoring arrangements, in terms that are satisfactory to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), the LPA is unable to satisfy itself that the proposals include adequate mitigation measures to prevent the proposed development from having an adverse effect on the integrity of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, in line with the requirements of Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended and Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43/EEC. The proposal would be contrary to Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan, Policies CP8 and CP4 of the Core Strategy.

11. In the absence of a completed Legal Agreement, the proposed development fails to make adequate contributions to sport and recreational facilities, contrary to MDD Local Plan policy TB08, Core Strategy policy CP4 and sections 4 and 8 of the NPPF

Informatives

1. This decision is in respect of the drawings and plans Location Plan; received by the Local Planning Authority on 26 March 2026 and plans: Revised Block Plan 2509(p)151 b; revised Site Plan 2509(p)150 b; Revised Access Plan 2509(p)152 b; Revised access plan junctions 2509(p)153 b; Revised Elevations 2509(p)155 b ; Revised Surface Water Drainage Plan 2509(p)156 b received by the Local Planning Authority on 5 June 2026.

2. The Council engages with all applicants in a positive and proactive way through specific pre-application enquiries and the detailed advice

available on the Council's website. On this particular application, no

pre-application advice was sought before the application was submitted. As the proposal was clearly contrary to the provisions of the Development Plan, it was considered that further discussions would

be unnecessary and costly for all parties.

BJC

Recommendation and conditions/reasons agreed:

Date: 08.07.26

REMEMBER - The earliest date for a decision on this application is: **22 May 2026**