

PLANNING REF: 252782

SUBMITTED BY: Paul Humphreys

PROPERTY ADDRESS:

DATE SUBMITTED: 05.12.2025

COMMENTS:

I wish to register my strong objection to the proposed planning application. I find it difficult to understand how this application could even be considered.

Environmental and Flood Risk Concerns

The proposal involves constructing a fuel depot to store over 837,000 litres of hazardous fuel oil, including kerosene, diesel, gas oil, heating oil, and hybrid vegetable oil. Storing highly flammable substances on this site presents a serious risk of environmental contamination and flooding. The site is a concrete island on a floodplain with a high water table and made ground of known instability, making it highly susceptible to flooding.

The plans also include a surface water and treated sewage outfall pipe directly into the River Loddon. This industrial discharge threatens to damage the adjacent nature reserve. Any fuel leakage or runoff would inevitably contaminate the river and nearby lakes, with potentially devastating ecological consequences.

The developer's claim of a 14% biodiversity gain, based on planting a small number of trees and shrubs, appears to be a token gesture that does not adequately mitigate the environmental risks. Furthermore, the proposed concrete retaining walls and limestone-filled gabions highlight the inherent unsuitability of the site.

Impact on Residential Community

Charvil and Twyford are residential villages, not industrial zones. This development would permanently alter the character and safety of our area and threaten local wildlife in the nature reserve and surrounding fields, which are enjoyed by residents daily.

Traffic and Safety Concerns

The Old Bath Road is already heavily trafficked and compromised by large vehicles, including articulated lorries delivering to nearby businesses. The proposed development estimates 132 vehicle movements per weekday, including 59 HGVs up to 42 tonnes. The turning radius for these vehicles would force them into oncoming traffic, creating significant collision risks.

Cyclists and pedestrians also use this road. A narrow footpath runs along the front of the site, connecting Charvil and Twyford, further increasing the danger to non-motorised road users.

Historical Flooding and Site Unsuitability This site has a long history of flooding. Over the past 35 years, the fields in front of the site have flooded every winter, and the lakes at the back have regularly forced walkers to avoid the area for days at a time. The site is a concrete island that even the applicant admits requires shoring up, underscoring its unsuitability for hazardous fuel storage.

Previous Unauthorized Activity

In January 2025, Speedy Fuels began operating at this site without proper planning permission, producing strong chemical odors. Operations only ceased after intervention by Councillor Sam Akhtar following my report.

Conclusion

This proposal is unsuitable and unsafe for a family-friendly residential area and is incompatible with the nearby nature reserve. It poses serious environmental, flood, and traffic risks that cannot be mitigated by the current plans. I therefore urge that this application be refused.