

PLANNING REF : 261722
PROPERTY ADDRESS : School Green Centre
:
: RG2 9EH
SUBMITTED BY : Bruce Winton
DATE SUBMITTED : 10/08/2026

COMMENTS:

Shinfield Parish Council objects to Planning Application 261722 for the following reasons.

1. Development within the AWE Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ)

The application site lies within the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) associated with AWE Burghfield.

The proposal introduces a permanent residential use, comprising two static caravans and a dayroom, within an area subject to emergency planning considerations.

Whilst the submitted Planning Statement refers to a Radiological Consequences Assessment and suggests that the proposed dayroom could provide shelter in the event of an emergency, the Parish Council considers that the fundamental planning issue is whether additional permanent residential occupation within the DEPZ represents opriate development.

The applicant's supporting documents seek to demonstrate that the risks can be managed. However, this does not remove the need for the Local Planning Authority to consider whether the introduction of further permanent residential development within the DEPZ is compatible with emergency planning objectives and the protection of public safety.

The Parish Council therefore requests that significant weight is given to the site's location within the DEPZ when determining this application.

2. Conflict with Policy CP5 - Development Locations

The application site lies outside the development locations identified by Policy CP5 of the Wokingham Local Plan Update.

The proposal introduces a new permanent residential planning unit within the open countryside and outside the settlements where residential development is directed by the adopted spatial strategy.

The Parish Council acknowledges that the applicant relies upon the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites and the claimed lack of a -year supply of traveller pitches. However, these are material considerations to be weighed by the Local Planning Authority and do not remove the clear conflict with the adopted Development Plan.

The proposal therefore conflicts with Policy CP5.

3. Conflict with Policy CP11 - Countryside

The application site is located within countryside protected by Policy CP11.

The proposal would permanently change the use of agricultural land to a mixed agricultural and residential use incorporating two static car avans, a dayroom, parking, domestic curtilage, access and associated infrastructure.

Although the Design and Access Statement argues that the site is visually contained and would assimilate into the surrounding area, the Parish Council considers that the proposal would nevertheless introduce a permanent residential use into the countryside and erode its rural character.

The cumulative effect would be a further encroachment of residential development into an agricultural landscape, contrary to the objectives of Policy CP11.

4. Flood Risk and Surface Water Management

The Parish Council has reviewed the submitted Flood Risk Assessment and notes that, whilst it concludes that the proposed development can be made safe through mitigation, the report also identifies existing drainage and flood risk issues that warrant careful consideration.

The applicant's own assessment records evidence of standing water on the site, notes that local residents report regular flooding following periods of heavy rainfall and identifies that the existing drainage ditch and highway drainage infrastructure are already under pressure, with sections appearing partially blocked.

The Flood Risk Assessment also acknowledges that the proposal introduces additional impermeable surfaces and confirms that the proposed residential use is classified as Highly Vulnerable Development for the purposes of national flood risk policy. It further recognises that the proposal must satisfy the Sequential and Exception Tests where applicable.

Whilst the applicant concludes that flood risk can be managed through mitigation measures, the Parish Council considers that the Local Planning Authority should carefully scrutinise whether those measures have been fully demonstrated and whether the proposal can remain safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

The Parish Council requests that the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that:

- the Sequential and Exception Tests have been correctly applied;
- the proposed development will not increase surface water runoff or flood risk on neighbouring land or the adjacent highway;
- the proposed drainage strategy is robust and deliverable; and
- appropriate planning conditions secure the implementation and long-term maintenance of the drainage infrastructure.

5. Highway Safety, Pedestrian Access and Sustainability

The Parish Council has significant concerns regarding the sustainability of the proposed location and the safety of future occupiers.

The proposal introduces a permanent residential use on a rural site that is poorly connected to local services and facilities. The supporting documents do not adequately demonstrate how future occupiers will safely access schools, healthcare facilities, shops, public transport or other community services without reliance upon the private motor car.

The surrounding highway network, in particular Great Lea, is not designed to accommodate regular pedestrian movements associated with permanent residential occupation.

In particular:

- there is no continuous footway linking the site with Three Mile Cross or other nearby settlements;
- pedestrians would be required to walk within or immediately adjacent to the carriageway for significant sections of their journey;
- there is little or no street lighting along much of Great Lea;
- Great Lea is regularly used by agricultural machinery, commercial vehicles, heavy goods vehicles, horse riders, cyclists and other road users;
- vehicle speeds create additional hazards for pedestrians; and
- opportunities for pedestrians to step clear of passing vehicles are limited.

The Parish Council is particularly concerned that these conditions would affect all future occupiers, including children, who may need to access education, school transport and local facilities on foot.

Furthermore, whilst the application proposes a new vehicular access, it provides very limited information regarding how that access will safely operate in practice.

The application does not adequately demonstrate:

- that appropriate visibility splays can be achieved and maintained;
- how vehicles entering and leaving the site will safely interact with traffic using Great Lea;
- how pedestrian movements will be protected at the site entrance;
- how residential traffic will safely coexist with agricultural traffic associated with the retained agricultural use;
- arrangements for refuse collection, deliveries and emergency service access; and
- how the access will continue to operate safely throughout the lifetime of the development.

The Parish Council considers that these omissions are significant and that the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposal represents a safe and sustainable form of development.

6. Policy CP8 - Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

The application site lies within the 7 km Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Linear Mitigation Zone identified by Policy CP8.

Residential development within this zone has the potential to increase recreational pressure on the Special Protection Area and must demonstrate compliance with the mitigation requirements of Policy CP8.

The Parish Council requests that the Local Planning Authority is fully satisfied that all mitigation requirements have been secured before any planning permission is granted.

7. Biodiversity and Ecological Enhancement

The Parish Council notes the submitted Ecological Report and the recommendations it makes for ecological mitigation and biodiversity enhancement.

The report identifies ecological features associated with the site, including boundary trees, drainage ditches, nearby ponds and habitat features of value to local wildlife. It also recommends biodiversity enhancements including bat boxes, bird boxes, bee bricks, habitat planters, ecological safeguards during construction and strict controls over external lighting.

The Parish Council requests that, should planning permission be granted, all mitigation and enhancement measures identified within the Ecological Report are secured by planning condition and implemented in full.

Particular attention should be given to ensuring that any external lighting complies with the submitted ecological recommendations to protect bats and other nocturnal wildlife.

8. Permanent Loss of Agricultural Land

The proposal would result in the permanent change of use of agricultural land to a mixed agricultural and residential use.

Although part of the land would remain in agricultural use, the proposal would introduce a permanent domestic planning unit, associated infrastructure and residential activity into the countryside.

The Parish Council considers that this represents an unnecessary erosion of agricultural land and further encroachment of residential development into the rural area.

9. Development Plan Conflict

The applicant's case relies heavily upon material considerations, including national traveller policy and the claimed shortage of traveller pitches.

However, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance

with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Parish Council considers that this proposal remains in conflict with the adopted Development Plan, particularly Policies CP5, CP8 and CP11, together with the site's location within the AWE Detailed Emergency Planning Zone.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, Shinfield Parish Council objects to Planning Application 261722.

The proposal would establish a permanent residential use:

- within the AWE Detailed Emergency Planning Zone;
- outside the development locations identified by Policy CP5;
- within countryside protected by Policy CP11;
- within the 7 km Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Linear Mitigation Zone under Policy CP8;
- on agricultural land; and
- in a location where there is no safe, continuous pedestrian route to local services and where the operation of the proposed access has not been adequately demonstrated.

The Parish Council also has concerns regarding flood risk, surface water management and the long-term sustainability of the site.

Taken together, these matters demonstrate that the proposal conflicts with the adopted Development Plan and that the applicant has failed to demonstrate that these conflicts are outweighed by material considerations.

Accordingly, Shinfield Parish Council respectfully requests that planning permission be refused. Shinfield Parish Council objects to Planning Application 261722 for the following reasons.

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