

PLANNING REF : 252782
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 10 Foxes Walk
: Charvil, Reading, Berkshire
: RG10 9TX
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Thomas Pimm
DATE SUBMITTED : 10/12/2025

COMMENTS:

OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION 252782 - Former Prince Brothers Service Station, Old Bath Road, Charvil

I wish to object to planning application 252782 for the proposed fuel storage and distribution depot at the former Prince Brothers service station on Old Bath Road, Charvil. The development is entirely inappropriate for this location and presents serious risks to public safety, the environment and local residential amenity.

1. Unacceptable proximity to Charvil Country Park, the Old River Loddon and the lake system

My family and I use Charvil Country Park regularly we walk our dog there most days, and my children often ride their bikes along the nearby paths and around the lakes. The park is a vital part of our daily routine and wellbeing, providing peaceful green space where we can safely enjoy nature.

The proposed industrial fuel depot would sit directly beside this important public space, which is home to otters, bats, deer, amphibians, fish and an extensive range of bird and plant life. Noise, lighting, fumes and vehicle movements from such a facility would seriously damage the tranquillity of the area and disrupt wildlife behaviours. It would also make the space far less appealing and safe for families like ours to continue using.

The applicant's suggestion of "biodiversity net gain" through limited planting in no way compensates for the ecological risks created by storing close to a million litres of fuel next to a nature reserve.

2. Flood risk and high likelihood of environmental contamination

Having lived here for over a decade, I have witnessed significant flooding in this area multiple times, including water reaching the boundaries of this very site. Flood events in 2014 and again in 2024 were substantial enough to make the site visibly unsafe for anything involving hazardous substances.

This location sits within a recognised floodplain. Storing diesel, kerosene and other hydrocarbons here presents an unacceptable contamination risk to:

The Old River Loddon

Canberra Lake and the country park lakes

The River Thames downstream

Local soils and groundwater

In flood conditions, it would be impossible to contain fuel spills or failures. Any leakage would rapidly spread through saturated ground and connected waterways, causing long-lasting and potentially irreversible ecological damage. With climate change increasing the frequency and severity of flood events, the risks are escalating, not diminishing.

3. Public health and safety risks

Fuel depots carry well-documented dangers, as shown by incidents such as the Bramley fuel leak, which resulted in water contamination, explosion risks and considerable disruption to residents and businesses. These risks would become a permanent feature of life in Charvil should this depot be approved.

Operational concerns

The wider area already struggles with heavy vehicle movements from Denmark House, where lorries frequently park hazardously. Adding fuel tankers to this stretch of road will only worsen existing issues.

When Speedy Fuels previously operated here without a licence in December 2024, tankers were observed turning across both carriageways near a bend an extremely dangerous manoeuvre given the limited visibility.

4. Fire risk and inadequate assessment of cumulative hazards

Fuel storage is legally classified as a hazardous operation governed by strict regulations. The applicant's safety assessment, however, considers only risks within its own boundary and fails to address the adjoining tyre storage and distribution facility another recognised high-risk use.

The National Planning Policy Framework requires decision-makers to consider cumulative risks and avoid developments that introduce unacceptable dangers to the public. Without a cross-boundary assessment, the application lacks the necessary information to make a sound or lawful decision.

5. Highway safety, traffic generation and unsuitable road infrastructure

The proposal would add a substantial number of tanker and vehicle movements to Old Bath Road, including:

59 articulated tanker movements per week (Mon-Fri)

73 car/van movements per week (Mon-Fri)

Additional weekend traffic

Old Bath Road is a narrow, semi-rural residential route. It is the

main walking and cycling corridor between Charvil and Twyford, used extensively by families, commuters and schoolchildren. My own children routinely cycle along this route, and we frequently walk our dog nearby, so we are acutely aware of how busy and constrained it already is.

Introducing heavy industrial vehicles increases the likelihood of serious or even fatal accidents, especially given the poor visibility in places and tight road layout. The road was not built to handle this level of HGV traffic, and would degrade rapidly despite recent resurfacing.

6. Noise, operating hours and impact on residential amenity

The proposed operating hours 5am to 6pm seven days a week, with the possibility of tankers arriving outside these times represent a dramatic intensification of activity compared to the former service station.

Noise from tankers, reversing alarms, loading operations and vehicle movements would severely impact residents' ability to enjoy their homes, gardens and local green spaces, particularly during early mornings, evenings and weekends. This conflicts directly with local planning policies protecting residential amenity.

7. Inappropriate land use and failure to demonstrate need

A fuel depot is an industrial operation entirely unsuitable for a site so close to over 1,000 homes, a nature reserve, and popular recreational areas. The applicant has not justified why this location is necessary, nor explained why safer, more appropriate industrial sites have not been considered.

The unauthorised operation of the facility in December 2024 demonstrated the disruption and safety concerns that would accompany full approval.

Conclusion

This application presents a combination of unacceptable risks flooding, fuel spill danger, fire hazards, HGV traffic, environmental damage, and harm to community wellbeing. Based on my own experiences of flooding, regular use of Charvil Country Park, and the daily presence of my children on local cycling routes, I am deeply concerned about the long-term consequences if this proposal were allowed to proceed.

For the safety of residents, protection of the environment, and preservation of Charvil's character, I respectfully urge the council to refuse planning application 252782.