

PLANNING REF : 252782
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 39 East Park Farm Drive
: Charvil, Twyford
: RG10 9UG
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Elizabeth Hogg
DATE SUBMITTED : 24/11/2025

COMMENTS:

Objection to planning application No. 252782
Address: Former Prince Brothers Service Station Old Bath Road
Reading RG10 9QJ

To whom it may concern,

We are writing to register our strong objection to the proposal by Speedy Fuels to develop the old "Prince Brothers" site at The Grove Service Station on the Old Bath Road, Charvil into a fuel storage and distribution centre by Speedy Fuels Ltd. I cannot think of a more unsuitable and inappropriate location for such a facility. We elected to move to Charvil just under a year ago for its unspoilt natural surroundings and this proposal simply only serves to go against this.

In summary, the primary issues are the volume of fuel, operating hours and daily estimated vehicle movements. With close to 1m litres of fuel to be stored on site and as a result of operations an estimated 132 vehicles turning in and out of the Old Bath Road site each week, with 59 being articulated lorries/tankers, it is inappropriate for any residential area let alone one close to a nature reserve and with relatively small road infrastructure around it. When you consider the type of fuel too, this is not insignificant, kerosene is ultimately jet fuel, we see no reason to store this in this location, it is irrespective and irresponsible. The proposal ebbs further than the previous one with the site boundaries now appearing to extend over the Old Bath Road entrance to the country park and anglers car park.

Objections are lodged on three core grounds;

1. The proximity of the site to the Old River Loddon, Charvil Country Park and the lakes
2. The risk of an accident / spill on site and the resulting potential for a disastrous pollution event
3. Public Health and Safety Concerns

The proximity of the site to the Old River Loddon, Charvil Country Park and the lakes

Charvil country park is a vital local resource for residents, visitors and anglers alike. It is an irreplaceable wildlife reserve and home to a vast array of aquatic, bird, animal and plant life, including otters, and deer. A huge number of bats and amphibians, including newts, are present in Charvil country park.

Work has taken place across the country park to improve access for all and increase the overall sustainability of it ensuring wildlife continues to thrive. To then allow this application would be incredibly counter intuitive to these biodiversity gains. The new proposal contains plans to plant 6 trees and small areas of shrubs

and some hedging. If this is to mitigate the original proposal not meeting planning guidelines for a 10% increase in biodiversity, it is simply a lip service effort in mitigating the other damage which will happen. The application maintains this planting will increase biodiversity by 14%. It is but a poor attempt to mitigate the environmental impact, when you weigh up the damage which will be done of having 1m litres of fuel on site.

This proposed facility is incompatible with the ecological and recreational land use of Charvil Country Park. Charvil Country Park and Charvil Meadows are designated as a public green space and wildlife reserve that supports biodiversity, promotes public well-being, and provides recreational opportunities.

The operation of a fuel facility:

- Contradicts the core purpose of the park;
- Threatens local flora and fauna, including fish stocks, amphibians, birds, and invertebrates;
- Diminishes the natural character of the park through noise, fumes, and light pollution;
- Risks driving away visitors, anglers, and all other local users due to industrial intrusion.

The risk of an accident / spill on site and the resulting potential for a disastrous pollution event

Any accidental leak or spill on this site would be catastrophic, especially in the event of an accident or spill on site. During flood conditions it is clear that there would be rescue and remediation difficulties. Fuel spills in waterlogged or flooded areas would be impossible to contain and clean, the environmental cost would be significant. A leak during a flood event would infiltrate soil and enter groundwater systems, causing long-term, irreversible damage, particularly noting the proposed fuel to be stored (diesel and kerosene). A fuel spill due to flooding would contaminate the adjacent lakes and The River Loddon and The River Thames, severely damaging aquatic ecosystems and killing fish and other wildlife, this is also at increased risk given the threat to and current state of the rivers with sewage being pumped into them.

Despite the mitigation measures proposed, in the case of an uncontainable leak or spill, maintenance to be overlooked or failure of / damage to the attenuation tank, the consequences for the Country Park, lakes & River Loddon would be irreparable.

The proposed site lies within a known floodplain. Installing fuel storage tanks in such a location presents an unacceptable risk of contamination during flood events, including:

- Leaking hydrocarbons into adjacent water bodies;
- Irreparable damage to ecosystems in the nearby lakes and river;
- Soil and groundwater contamination with long-term health implications;
- Amplified difficulty of emergency response during flood conditions.

Given the increasing frequency of extreme weather due to climate change, this risk is only expected to increase. The incidents of very widespread flooding there are increasing in numbers and

duration year on year. Even now, after some autumnal rainfall, the ground is increasingly waterlogged across the park, an early indication another flooding event is highly probable as we embark on the winter months. Last winter the Old River Loddon breached its banks on at least 3

separate occasions into Canberra Lake causing the entire area to be flooded. The flood water reaches the entire southern boundary of this site and continues to achieve higher levels up the side of the 'made ground' on which the site stands. It is only a matter of time before we have an event where the site is inundated with flood water.

Public Health and Safety Concerns

Public Health and Safety concerns are summarised below, but fundamentally, operating a fuel depot near a public amenity endangers local residents and visitors.

Fire Safety

Irrespective of plans, with diesel, kerosene and the like to be stored on site, a fire and explosion risk is ever present. The fumes, damage and danger to surrounding areas as a result of this is significant. Not only will this have an impact on the wildlife, it presents a grave danger of toxic fumes and a hazard to life overall to local residents whose properties are nearby. There have been several documented cases of fires at industrial estates with local surrounding residents having to be evacuated and exposed to toxic fumes.

Site Access Safety

The wider site is already busy with the large Total Tyres site at Denmark House, regularly having articulated lorries parked outside, obstructing the highway and providing a hazard to other road users. Increasing the traffic passage into this complex, including an increase in large vehicles will compound this properly. Additionally, consider the safety issues of tankers turning out on to what a relatively narrow road, blocking both sides of the carriageway.

Degradation of Roads

The Old Bath Road represents the only direct route from Charvil to Twyford for cyclists and pedestrians. Without a proper plan in place to maintain this road appropriately, the additional traffic from large tankers will cause more significant and widespread degradation. I would like to point out that perhaps there should have been an offer in place to maintain the road or a plan from the highways department to support this. The road has recently been resurfaced and running lorries along there will cause greater and more impactful degradation.

Road Traffic Safety

The road outside the development is on a bend and has a 40-mph limit. Increased numbers of lorries entering/exiting this site will present a significant hazard on this fast-moving road with a narrow footpath as is. It is the main route through to Twyford and Twyford station, residents of Charvil should not be expected to bear this safety burden going about their daily lives. Lorries block visibility and create all round dangerous conditions. If this application is allowed the nature, volume and operating hours of the vehicles using the site in

the numbers described in the application will cause a serious accident and injuries or fatalities.

Child Safety

Approximately 250 schoolchildren in Charvil attend The Piggott School (Wargrave). The vast majority live south of the Old Bath Road and surrounding areas, needing to cross it on their daily walk or cycle to school. Having fuel tankers going up and down at what will be a significant pace presents real danger for footpath users and for children's health and wellbeing.

Mini Roundabout

The Mini roundabout junction between Old Bath Road and Park Lane has been an area of concern and stress for local residents for a considerable time as the design is suboptimal and not appropriate for 50 x 44 tonne Articulated lorries expected on a daily basis.

Local Traffic Increase

The anticipated daily traffic movements are; Mon to Fri - 59 x 44 Tonnes Artics and 73 x Cars/Vans, Sat - 12 x 44 Tonnes Artics and 20 x Cars/Vans, Sun - 6 x 44 Tonnes Artics and 2 x Cars/Vans. This is a significant increase in volume to an already busy road, which will as stated in the point above cause greater degradation, an increase in vehicle-based pollution (when many in the local area make every effort to walk) and present an overall safety risk to all road users and pedestrians. It will also represent a significant increase in noise pollution for those living on the road too.

Disruptive operating hours

The previous hours of operation from this site were Monday to Friday 9am to 5.30pm. The proposal is to run from 5am to 6pm ordinarily Monday to Friday with potential for tankers to arrive outside of these hours across the night. The operation will also be seven days a week, with marginally reduced operating hours at the weekend and at Bank Holidays.

Consequently, many more people will be affected by this site in their leisure time; there will be more noise and disruption at weekends when using the country park and simply living within the homes

surrounding the site, adversely affecting the quality of life of many who like to enjoy the peace and quiet of the area. This would be contrary to CP3, and NPPF paragraph 185, in that this will impact negatively on the residents' enjoyment of the countryside.

In conclusion, the proposal for this facility in this location is totally irresponsible. It represents an environmentally careless and flawed use of the land that bears no consideration to local residents and the surrounding areas. I urge the planning committee to prioritise long-term sustainability, public safety, and environmental preservation by rejecting this development outright.

Yours Faithfully,
Nathan and Elizabeth Hogg