

Grounds of Appeal

**Land at Gravelley Bridge Farm,
Grazeley Green Road,
Grazeley, Reading RG7 1LG**

Prepared For
**Gravelley Bridge Shooting
Association**

**6149
October 2025**



bell cornwell

CHARTERED TOWN PLANNERS

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Bell Cornwell has been instructed by Mr Tim Evans of the Gravelley Bridge Shooting Association (the 'Appellant') to prepare an Appeal against the Enforcement Notice ('EN') issued by Wokingham Borough Council (the 'Council') which has been served on land known as "Land at Gravelley Bridge Farm, Grazeley Green Road, Grazeley, Reading, RG7 1LG" (the site).

1.2 This Statement is prepared in support of an Appeal against the Council's decision to issue the EN, which is signed and dated 12th September 2025 and would have come into effect on 20th October 2025 had an appeal not been made.

1.3 The EN alleges the following alleged breach of planning control:

'Without planning permission, the material change of use of the Land to a shooting club facility (Sui Generis) and unauthorised operational development (erection of fencing, hardstanding and buildings) and engineering operation (creation of bunds).'

1.4 The reason for issuing the EN is given as follows:

- i) It appears to the Council that the change of use has occurred within the last 10 years.
- ii) The unauthorised development represents an unsustainable and unacceptable form of development outside of development limits, within the countryside, with no justification and which has a detrimental urbanising impact on the character and appearance of the countryside. As such, it is contrary to the spatial objectives of the development plan and to Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) ("Core Strategy") Policies CP1, CP3, CP6, CP9 and CP11 and Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014) ("MDD") Policies CC01 and CC02 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024).
- iii) As a result of inadequate vehicular access into and out of the site, the unauthorised development results in the deterioration of the enjoyment of



SHIN30 pedestrianised public right of way. The unauthorised development therefore conflicts with paragraph 105 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) and policies CP3 and CP11 of the Core Strategy (2010).

- iv) The unauthorised development has failed to demonstrate that it is acceptable in terms of flood risk and that it is located within the sequentially most preferable location. As such, the development is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), policy CP1 of the Core Strategy 2010, and policy CC09 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014).
- v) The unauthorised development has not demonstrated that it can be safely accommodated, having regard to the needs of Blue light services and the emergency off-site plan, for the Atomic Weapons Establishment site at Burghfield which would increase the likelihood of significant effects affecting human health. As such, the development is contrary to Policy TB04 of the MDD Local Plan 2014, policy CP3 of the Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).
- vi) The unauthorised development has not demonstrated that it would not result in adverse noise implications (from shooting) to the surrounding area, contrary to policy CC06 of the Managing Development Delivery Plan (2014) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).
- vii) The unauthorised development has not demonstrated that it would not result in adverse land contamination, contrary to policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (2010) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).
- viii) The unauthorised development has not demonstrated that it would not result in increased surface water from the development that would be managed in a sustainable manner, contrary to policy CC10 of the Managing Delivery Development (2014) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

1.5 The requirements of the EN are as follows:



- (i) Cease the use of the Land for use as a shooting club facility/ range.
 - (ii) Remove from the Land all buildings and structures, including disconnecting all utilities, shown in blue in the approximate locations on the attached Plan 2.
 - (iii) Remove from the land all chattels, fences, hardstanding and bunds, shown in blue in the approximate locations on the attached Plan 2.
 - (iv) Remove from the Land all other paraphernalia associated with the unauthorised shooting club facility.
 - (v) Remove all the resultant materials associated with steps (i) to (iii).
 - (vi) Restore the Land to its former condition prior to the breach of planning control taking place.
- 1.6 The time for compliance with these requirements is given in the EN as nine months.
- 1.7 The appeal is made under the following grounds
- a) that, in respect of any breach of planning control which may be constituted by the matters stated in the notice, planning permission ought to be granted;
 - d) that, at the date when the notice was issued, no enforcement action could be taken in respect of any breach of planning control;
 - f) that, the steps required by the notice to be taken, or the activities required by the notice to cease, exceed what is necessary to remedy any breach of planning control
- 1.8 As Ground (a) forms part of the Appeal, the required fee (£1176) will be paid to the Council when requested.
- 1.9 The Appellant reserves the right to add to their case at the six week statement stage.

THE APPEAL SITE

- 1.10 The appeal site is located in the countryside on land that is sandwiched between larger parcels of land historically used for agriculture. It is access via an existing track that



winds its way up to and through the original farmyard where it joins the public highway. The land to the north of the yard is operating as a soil and aggregate processing so is no longer in agricultural use.

- 1.11 The site itself extends to approximately 0.4 hectares and made use of land that was otherwise vacant. The existing use and buildings were first established in 2019/2020, with the building operations being completed by 2021 and was set up to provide a facility for local community groups (e.g. scouts) to make use of following the closure of other similar facilities. Further details are provided in an accompanying statement from the Appellant (Appendix 1).
- 1.12 The buildings provide a club house with 9 sheltered gun lanes and basic refreshment making facilities, a toilet block and storage. There external shooting range sits to the north of the club house and is marked out with targets and bordered by fencing and a bund. Parking is provided on hard standing in the area to the south of the clubhouse.
- 1.13 The facility is open four days a week, as follows:
- Thursday (2pm-8pm)
 - Friday (10am-2pm)
 - Saturday/Sunday (10am-4pm)
- 1.14 There is track and separate public footpath running to the east of the site. These are outside of the site as depicted within the EN.
- 1.15 A search of the Council's online planning register reveals that a planning application was made in 2008 for a "Proposed change of use from quad track to training area for agricultural and construction equipment". This was however withdrawn prior to a decision being made.



1.16 We include the following drawings with the submission:

- Site Location Plan
- Block plan
- Site plan
- Lodge/clubhouse elevations
- Lodge/clubhouse floor plan
- Lodge/clubhouse roof plan
- Storage and WC elevations
- Storage and WC floor plan
- Storage and WC roof plan
- Store plan



2 GROUNDS OF APPEAL

2.1 We set out the consideration of the grounds of appeal below.

Ground (a) Planning Permission ought to be granted

2.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

2.3 For the purposes of this application the Development Plan comprises of:

- Adopted Core Strategy (CS) Development Plan Document - January 2010
- Adopted Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan – February 2014
- Policies Map

2.4 Regard is also given to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out the Government's planning policy aims and objectives. It sits outside of the statutory development plan but is a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Development outside of development limits

2.5 The EN states that the development “...represents an unsustainable and unacceptable form of development outside of development limits, within the countryside, with no justification and which has a detrimental urbanising impact on the character and appearance of the countryside”.

2.6 CS Policy CP11 relates to development outside development limits, including countryside. Its purpose is to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment. It nevertheless allows for the development where:

- 1) *It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and*



- 2) *It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and*
- 3) *It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement; or*
- 4) *In the case of residential extensions, does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building;*
- 5) *In the case of replacement dwellings the proposal must:*
 - i. *Bring about environmental improvements; or*
 - ii. *Not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.*
- 6) *Essential community facilities cannot be accommodated within development limits or through the re-use/replacement of an existing building;*
- 7) *Affordable housing on rural exception sites in line with CP9.*

2.7 Criteria 1-3 are most relevant. The Council's position is that the development represents an unacceptable form of development outside of development limits. However, in considering the logic of this statement, the shooting use is a type of development that is not suitable for an urban area and so by definition is a type of business that should be located outside of development limits.

2.8 CP11(1) expressly allows for countryside based enterprises and activities that contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside. The shooting club use accords with this policy aim. It should also be noted that clay pigeon shooting already takes place on the land, albeit limited to 28 days of the year.

2.9 CP11(2) seeks to prevent excessive encroachment or expansion of development, whilst CP11(3) is intended to place development within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion. To that end, there are inconsistencies with the



NPPF that states at paragraph 88 (supporting a prosperous rural economy) that planning policies and decisions should enable *“a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings”*. It therefore goes beyond CP11 in that it also allows for new buildings.

2.10 It also enables *“sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside”*.

2.11 In this case, the development is making use of buildings that are lawful by virtue of time (see ground (c) below), but in any event, the use of new buildings is also facilitated. The principle of development therefore accords with the aims of Policy CP11 and the NPPF in supporting the rural economy and leisure uses.

Access and Public Right of Way

2.12 The EN also sets out that *“As a result of inadequate vehicular access into and out of the site, the unauthorised development results in the deterioration of the enjoyment of SHIN30 pedestrianised public right of way”*.

2.13 The referred to public right of way runs in a north/south direction along the east side of the site, outside of the red line plan provided in the EN (and must be at least 12m from the shooting area for health and safety requirements). As such the development site as depicted does not itself impact on the footpath:

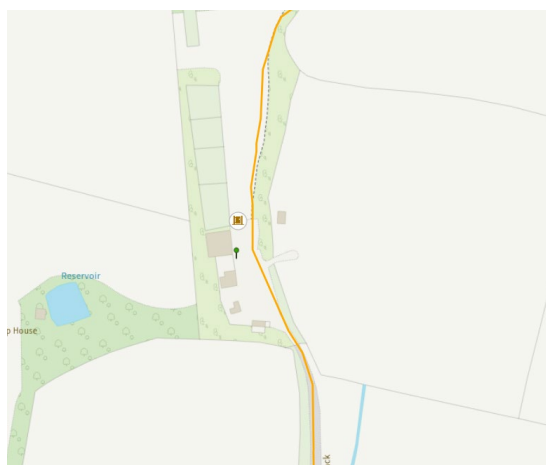


Figure 3 - Location of PROW



- 2.14 Moreover, the Appellant has made improvements to the PROW that have made it more accessible. In relation to the suitability of the vehicular access, this is partially shared with the adjacent soil and aggregate production that was approved under application 232536. Whilst this requires the land to be restored after the above production is completed, the access into the site would still be maintain and the original track restored. This joins onto the access road to the appeal site that has been long present historically.
- 2.15 It can therefore be demonstrated that access to the site has not resulted in the deterioration of the public right of way.

Flood Risk

- 2.16 In respect of flood risk, a search of the Government's online mapping, the site falls within flood zones 2 and 3. Whilst the NPPF sets out that a sequential risk-based approach should also be taken to individual applications to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source, it also makes clear that applications for changes of use should not be subject to the sequential test.
- 2.17 Applied to this case, although the provision of new building may fail the sequential test, this could not reasonably be applied, because the buildings cannot be enforced against as they have been present for more than four years (see Ground (c) below). They are therefore lawful structures, as such they could not reasonably be located elsewhere. As such the development in question relates only to a change of use, for which no sequential test is required. The use also falls withing the 'less vulnerable' classification, as set out in planning practice guidance, where no exception test is required either (Paragraph: 079 Reference ID: 7-079-20220825 Revision date: 25 08 2022).
- 2.18 It should also be noted that the site only operates for four days a week, for a total of 22 hours. The exposure to a possible flood event is therefore relatively small and with modern forecasting, and flood alerts, there would normally be adequate warning, which would enable the business to prepare and if necessary close down.



- 2.19 The EN also includes surface water, stating that *“The unauthorised development has not demonstrated that it would not result in increased surface water from the development that would be managed in a sustainable manner”*. However, flood mapping shows that the site is not at risk of surface flooding:

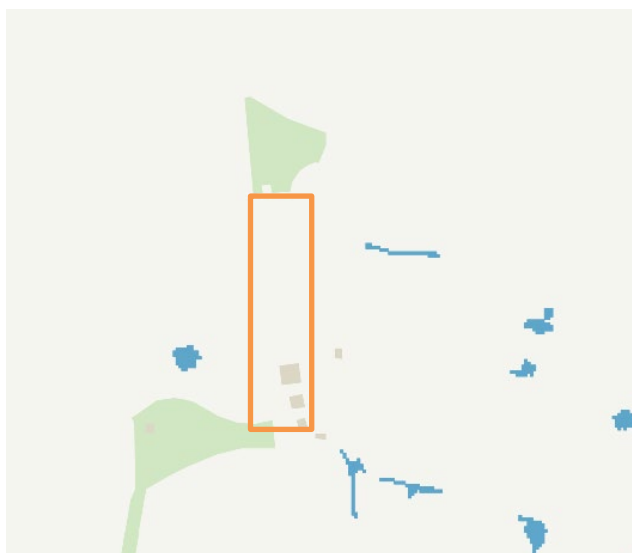


Figure 4 - Surface Water Flood Risk (orange box shows area site is located)

- 2.20 As such it can be demonstrated that the proposal does not pose any risk in terms of surface water flooding.

Atomic Weapons Establishment

- 2.21 The EN also states that the development has not demonstrated that it can be safely accommodated, having regard to the needs of Blue light services and the emergency off-site plan, for the Atomic Weapons Establishment site at Burghfield.

- 2.22 MDD Policy TB04 states that:

“Development will only be permitted where the applicant demonstrates that the increase in the number of people living, working, shopping and/or visiting the proposal (including at different times of the day) can be safely accommodated having regard to the needs of “Blue light” services and the emergency off-site plan for the Atomic Weapons Establishment site at Burghfield.”



- 2.23 In this case, the people on the site essentially relate to two sets of people, firstly staff members and secondly visitors. In relation to the first, the use only functions for four days of the week and is operated by staff that are already present on the land in relation to wider operations. In relation to visitors, the facility has capacity for up to 18 shooters (based on two sharing each lane), so is small scale and will often arrive in groups via their own modes of transport.
- 2.24 In the event of an emergency, there would therefore be the ability to self-evacuate, which would place little, if any, additional pressure on blue light services being able to carry out the emergency plan. In the unlikely event that the people cannot not self-evacuate, the Club House would provide temporary shelter.
- 2.25 It is therefore considered that the development does not place significant pressure on the ability to carry out the emergency plan.

Noise

- 2.26 Adverse noise implications (from shooting) to the surrounding area, is also listed in the EN as a reason for its issue. On this matter, it is accepted that noise can be detrimental to sensitive receptors such as residential properties. In this case, the site is not neighbouring any houses with the closest being over 300m away.
- 2.27 The noise immitted from air guns is also low so the potential for noise to carry and disturb is very low. Regard should also be given to existing background noises from the neighbour soil and aggregate processing, and there is also a railway line running 800m to the west of the site, which nearby residential properties are more closely situated.

The potential for noise to cause disturbance to amenity is therefore remote.

Contamination

- 2.28 The final matter raised in the EN is that it has not demonstrated that the development would not result in adverse land contamination. However, the use is not one that would create any obvious contamination of the land and the buildings and structures



are equally benign in this respect. Consequently, there would be no risk of contamination from the use or buildings.

Ground (c) - at the date when the notice was issued, no enforcement action could be taken in respect of any breach of planning control;

- 2.29 As the Council will be aware, there are time limits for the LPA to issue an enforcement notice, according to the type of development. This is outlined in section 171B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (see also The Planning Act 2008 (Commencement No. 8) and Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (Commencement No. 4 and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2024 for transitional arrangements).
- 2.30 Where the development occurred before the 25 April 2025, it becomes immune from enforcement if no action is taken:
- within 4 years of substantial completion for a breach of planning control consisting of operational development;
 - within 4 years for an unauthorised change of use to a single dwellinghouse;
 - within 10 years for any other breach of planning control (essentially other changes of use)
- 2.31 The EN sets out that *“It appears to the Council that the change of use has occurred within the last 10 years”*. This therefore relates to the use only and not any operational development. Indeed, it can be demonstrated that the operational works, which relates to the construction of the club house, shooting enclosure, bund and hardstanding, occurred more than four years ago. For example, the above (other than the bund) are clearly shown on freely available open source aerial photographs of the site:



Figure 1 - Aerial photo of the site, dated 16/07/2021



Figure 2 - Aerial photo of the site, dated 6/7/2022

- 2.32 The bund, which is absent from figure 1, appears in July 2022 but was also created in 2021. The owner statement (Appendix 1) provides further evidence in terms of timelines.
- 2.33 Given the above, no enforcement action can be taken that relates to the operational development that has occurred.



Ground (f) that, the steps required by the notice to be taken, or the activities required by the notice to cease, exceed what is necessary to remedy any breach of planning control

2.34 To remedy the alleged breach, the EN requires the below actions:

- i) Cease the use of the Land for use as a shooting club facility/ range.
- ii) Remove from the Land all buildings and structures, including disconnecting all utilities, shown in blue in the approximate locations on the attached Plan 2.
- iii) Remove from the land all chattels, fences, hardstanding and bunds, shown in blue in the approximate locations on the attached Plan 2.
- iv) Remove from the Land all other paraphernalia associated with the unauthorised shooting club facility.
- v) Remove all the resultant materials associated with steps (i) to (iii).
- vi) Restore the Land to its former condition prior to the breach of planning control taking place.

2.35 All the above, except for 'i', relate to the operational development. However, considering the position set out above under ground (c), these actions exceed what is necessary due to time limits on enforcement. The requirements set out under ii-vi would be unreasonable.



3 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The report herewith sets out the grounds for the appeal.
- 3.2 It is considered that planning permission should be granted for the development and that it accords with the aim of the development plan and the NPPF. It is also considered that the buildings and associated operational development has been in place for more than four years. Under transitional arrangements, enforcement action can no longer be taken in respect of the building works.
- 3.3 Notwithstanding the above, the Appellant reserves the right to add to their case at the six week statement stage to provide further evidence that the EN should be quashed.



APPENDIX 1 – APPELLANT STATEMENT

Statement on the Development of the GBSA Shooting Range – 2018

In Nov 2018, following the closure of local village hall and cadet facilities, I took the initiative to develop a dedicated shooting range to support the continued training and recreational needs of our local Scout group. Recognizing the importance of providing a safe, accessible space for target shooting, the initial construction included a covered seating area for participants and an outdoor target range to ensure all-weather usability.

To further support the growing number of users, we installed toilet facilities April 2019 (Photos Attached). As the range's popularity increased, we recognized the importance of inclusivity and later added a fully accessible disabled toilet to accommodate our disabled shooters and visitors.

As interest grew and feedback was received from Scout leaders and parents, it became clear that there was potential for the facility to benefit the wider community. In response to this demand, we expanded the site in August 2019 to include a clubhouse (Photos Attached) – a warm, dry environment where shooters could sign in, socialize, and gather before and after sessions. Completed in 2020

What began as a community-focused project for Scouts has since developed into a well-used and welcoming facility for both youth and public use, built on the foundation of accessibility, safety, and community spirit.

The range is set up with clearly marked firing lanes, appropriate backstops, safety signage, and a designated area for instruction and supervision. All activities are carried out under the guidance of qualified BASC personnel, with strict safety procedures in place.

The shooting range has become much more than just a place to practice marksmanship — it has grown into a vital social hub where people of all ages and backgrounds come together. For many, particularly those in rural areas or facing social isolation, the range provides a sense of purpose, routine, and belonging. It offers a safe and welcoming space that supports mental health and wellbeing through shared activity, fresh air, and positive social interaction. Friendships have formed across generations, with young learning alongside older, more experienced shooters, and families gathering to support one another. Many participants have expressed how the range has helped them through challenging times by giving them a reason to get out, engage with others, and feel part of something meaningful. The community spirit fostered here continues to grow, making the range a truly inclusive place where everyone is welcome and valued.

Your Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Evans', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Tim Evans



April 2019



Aug 2019



Nov 2019



May 2020



June 2020



June 2020



May 2020



June 2020



June 2020