

PLANNING REF : 252769
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 7
: Link Way, Arborfield, Reading, Berkshire
: RG2 9PD
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Stephen Catherall
DATE SUBMITTED : 16/01/2026

COMMENTS:

Planning Application 252769 - Gleeson proposed Traveller site at Mole Road / Betty Grove Lane

I wish to object to this application on planning grounds. My concerns relate both to the proposed Traveller site at Mole Road / Betty Grove Lane and to the wider Hall Farm / Loddon Garden Village development.

My objection is not to Traveller provision in principle, but to the suitability, safety and scale of what is proposed in this specific location, and to the cumulative impacts of the wider scheme.

1. Highway Safety and Access

The proposed Traveller site would be accessed via Betty Grove Lane, a narrow, single-track rural lane with no pavements or street lighting, and via Mole Road, which is already busy with commuter and school traffic.

I am concerned that the application does not demonstrate that this access arrangement is safe or appropriate for regular caravan movements, refuse vehicles and emergency services. In particular, there appears to be:

- No independent Road Safety Audit
- No swept-path (vehicle tracking) analysis for caravans, refuse vehicles or fire appliances
- No clear commitment to physical road improvements

Without this evidence, it is not possible to conclude that the access is safe, which conflicts with NPPF paragraph 111.

At a wider level, the Hall Farm development would generate a very large increase in traffic, placing further pressure on an already constrained local road network. The scheme appears heavily reliant on major highway infrastructure being delivered on time, yet funding and delivery certainty for these works remains unclear.

2. Flood Risk and Safe Access

Permanent Traveller pitches are classed as a Highly Vulnerable use in national planning policy. This means they should not be located where flooding could affect safety or access.

Local roads in the area, including Mill Lane and routes within the lower Loddon valley, have flooded repeatedly in recent years. Even if the pitches themselves lie outside the highest flood zones, the access routes may become unsafe or impassable during flood events, particularly for caravans and emergency vehicles.

The application does not yet convincingly demonstrate safe, dry access and egress for the lifetime of the development, including under

climate change scenarios. This is a fundamental requirement under NPPF flood risk policy.

Similar concerns apply to the wider Hall Farm site, where large areas lie within or close to the floodplain and safe access during extreme events has not been fully proven.

3. Over-Concentration of Traveller Provision

There are already existing Traveller pitches at Belvedere Park and

on Mole Road. Adding a further 20 pitches at Betty Grove Lane would result in a significant concentration of provision in a very small area.

This appears inconsistent with Wokingham Borough Council's stated approach of proportionate distribution and risks placing an undue burden on one local community. While borough-wide need is accepted, it does not follow that such a large proportion of that need must be met at one constrained and sensitive junction.

4. Landscape and Residential Amenity

The proposed Traveller site would introduce a relatively intensive use at the rural edge of Sindlesham, including hardstanding, lighting, increased vehicle movements and associated activity.

This would alter the character of the area, eroding the rural setting of the village and affecting the amenity of nearby residents. The site was not clearly presented in earlier masterplans or consultations, and its late inclusion raises concerns about transparency and proper consideration of alternatives.

5. Infrastructure Capacity and Deliverability

Local infrastructure is already under pressure, particularly roads, drainage, schools and healthcare. I am concerned that there are no binding mechanisms to ensure that necessary upgrades will be delivered before occupation of either the Traveller site or the wider development.

Approving development without firm phasing and delivery guarantees risks exposing future residents to safety issues and placing further strain on existing communities.

6. Prematurity and Policy Compliance

The application is being considered while the Local Plan is still under examination. Given the unresolved issues around transport, flood risk and infrastructure delivery, granting permission at this stage risks being premature and could undermine the integrity of the plan-making process.

Conclusion

For the reasons above, I do not believe the application, as currently proposed, demonstrates that it is safe, sustainable or appropriately located. It seems very telling that at a recent meeting with local residents we were told the location had been chosen as placing it elsewhere would 'devalue' properties on the proposed new development. It appears the location has been chosen more for commercial gain than with any real consideration. I respectfully ask the Council to refuse the application or require substantial revisions, supported by robust evidence, before any approval is considered.