

PLANNING REF : 261171  
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Uplands  
: Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield, Reading, Berks  
: RG7 1PY  
SUBMITTED BY : Councillor David Edmonds  
DATE SUBMITTED : 24/06/2026

COMMENTS:

Formal Member Objection & Committee Call-In Request

I am writing in my capacity as an elected Wokingham Borough Councillor to register a strong formal objection to planning application 261171.

This proposal represents an unsustainable overdevelopment of a highly constrained rural greenfield site. It directly violates several core statutory policies within the Wokingham Borough Development Plan.

Committee Listing Request (Call-In): In accordance with Wokingham Borough Council's constitutional procedures, please note that if the planning officer is minded to approve this application under delegated powers, I formally request that it is listed for determination by the Planning Committee.

The application raises substantial, material local planning concerns regarding flood risk, highway capacity, and community balance that require full public and democratic scrutiny.

I urge the council to refuse this application based on the following severe material planning considerations:

1. Disproportionate Spatial Concentration and Policy Conflict.

Policy Breach: The proposal directly violates Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan Policy TB21 (Gypsy and Traveller Sites) and Paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS).

Over-Concentration and Dominance: National policy strictly mandates that local authorities must ensure traveler sites do not dominate the nearest settled community or place an undue burden on local infrastructure. Swallowfield and its immediate surrounding rural parishes already accommodate a significant, highly disproportionate percentage of the Borough's total pitch provision. Adding further pitches on Charlton Lane represents an unacceptable over-concentration. It tips the balance from sustainable integration to spatial dominance, directly undermining local community cohesion.

No Unmet Statutory Need: Wokingham Borough Council actively maintains a robust, demonstrable 5-Year Land Supply for Gypsy and Traveller pitches based on the council's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) and Local Plan Update evidence base. Because there is no unmet statutory need, there is absolutely no planning justification to override strict local greenfield, highway, and environmental protections.

## 2. Severe Drainage, Surface Water Run-off, and Groundwater Flood Risk

**Policy Breach:** This scheme conflicts with Core Strategy Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development) and MDD Policy CC09 (Development and Flood Risk), alongside Chapter 14 of the NPPF.

**Groundwater Vulnerability:** The site sits in an area with a documented, high vulnerability to groundwater flooding and seasonal surface water ponding. Converting natural, permeable rural land into extensive hardstanding (caravans, utility blocks, vehicle tracks) will drastically accelerate runoff.

**Inadequate Mitigation:** The proposed layout fails to demonstrate that sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) can function properly within the local clay geology. The scheme will increase peak flow rates into existing ditches and culverts, directly exacerbating localized flood risks to adjacent, established properties.

## 3. Highways Safety, Substandard Access, and Infrastructure Capacity

**Policy Breach:** The proposal fails to satisfy the rigorous highway safety standards set out in Core Strategy Policy CP6 (Managing Travel Demand) and MDD Policy TB21 (Criteria e).

**Hazardous Narrow Roads:** Access to the site is entirely dependent on Charlton Lane and surrounding rural roads, which are substandard, narrow, and lack the horizontal geometry to safely accommodate large touring caravans, towing vehicles, and commercial/delivery traffic. Two large vehicles cannot safely pass each other on these segments.

**Emergency Vehicle Obstruction:** The intensified vehicle movements generated by this site will create a bottleneck, resulting in defensive on-street parking that chokes the local road network. This presents an unacceptable hazard, threatening to obstruct emergency services, refuse collection vehicles, and local agricultural transport.

**Pedestrian Vulnerability:** The surrounding lanes lack continuous pedestrian footways or street lighting. Forcing pedestrians to walk on the narrow carriageway alongside an influx of heavy residential and towing traffic creates a critical, unmitigated highway safety hazard.

## 4. Harmful Visual Impact on Rural Character

**Policy Breach:** The design directly conflicts with Core Strategy Policy CP3 (General Principles for Development) and the Wokingham Borough Design Guide.

**Visual Encroachment:** The cumulative urbanizing impact of multiple caravans, ancillary utility blocks, boundary fences, and domestic vehicles will permanently scar the open, rural landscape. It is entirely out of character with the established low-density layout and grain of the surrounding settlement pattern.

## Conclusion

This application represents an unsustainable development that introduces severe infrastructure strain, heightens flood risks, creates highway hazards, and breaches local over-concentration limits.

I therefore request that planning officers protect the sustainability of the Swallowfield area and refuse application 261171. If officers intend to recommend approval, I look forward to presenting these material arguments directly to the Planning Committee.