

# **TETSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATION**

## **Application P25/S2747/FUL – Change of Use of Land to a Gypsy/Traveller Site**

Land south-west of London Road, near Tetsworth, Oxfordshire, OX9 7AZ

### **1. Introduction**

Tetsworth Parish Council (TPC) objects in the strongest possible terms to planning application P25/S2747/FUL, which seeks retrospective permission for the change of use of agricultural land to a Gypsy/Traveller site comprising 12 mobile homes, 12 touring caravans, and 12 utility rooms. Previous appeal decisions APP/Q3115/W/16/3156409 and APP/Q3115/W/18/3205628 both dismissed earlier proposals for an identical 12-pitch Traveller site at this location. These decisions demonstrate that the site remains entirely unsuitable for such development. Furthermore, TPC considers that this retrospective application—submitted following unauthorised occupation and development—should have been rejected at the validation stage due to serious deficiencies. This representation summarises the planning history, outlines the technical and policy shortcomings of the application, and provides evidence supporting refusal and enforcement action.

### **2. Site Planning History**

Since 2015, the site has been subject to several near-identical proposals for a 12-pitch Traveller site:

- 2015–2016: Application P15/S3936/FUL was refused on 29 February 2016. An appeal was lodged in August 2016.
- 2018: A second application P18/S0970/FUL was lodged on 20 March 2018; an appeal followed on 22 June 2018.
- 2019 Inquiry: Both appeals were heard jointly and dismissed on 13 January 2020. Costs were awarded to TPC and the LPA but not recovered.
- 2023: A smaller stable block proposal (P22/S3350/FUL) was approved on 21 December 2023; there is no evidence it has been implemented.
- August 2025: Unauthorised occupation and development commenced despite an SODC Temporary Stop Notice (23 August 2025).
- September 2025: The current retrospective application was validated and registered on 17 September 2025.

### **3. Noise and Living Conditions**

Noise from the M40 motorway exceeds acceptable national thresholds. Increased traffic volumes and deteriorating surfacing have worsened conditions since the 2020 appeal decisions. Key points include:

- The applicant's noise survey used a single monitoring point over five calm summer days, failing to capture the dominant south-westerly winds.
- The noise climate is now worse than the 2019 multi-point 3D survey accepted by the inspector.
- Outdoor noise levels breach national amenity standards.
- Reliance on sealed windows and air-conditioning is impractical for long-term occupation.
- 1.5m fencing provides negligible mitigation.
- The 2019 inspector concluded that noise would cause unacceptable living conditions, contrary to Policy EP2 and NPPF paragraph 180(a).

### **4. Flood Risk and Drainage**

The unauthorised importation of hardcore has raised ground levels and removed a pond previously identified as ecologically significant. This has worsened flood risk on-site and for neighbouring land. No Flood Risk Assessment accompanies the current application. There is increased risk of surface water flooding on the adjacent A40 and potential pollution of Latchford Brook, impacting the Spartan Fen SSSI downstream.

### **5. Landscape and Ecology**

At the 2019 inquiry, the site was judged to have medium landscape sensitivity. The inspector found that the development would cause serious harm to the Undulating Semi-Enclosed Vale landscape type, contrary to Policies CSEN1 and G4. The current proposal repeats these harms: it is visually intrusive from the M40, A40 and nearby PROWs, and has destroyed the site's previous ecological richness. The unauthorised urbanisation of the site represents an unacceptable intrusion into the open countryside.

## **6. Policy Context**

Under SOLP 2035 Policy H14, the site fails to meet Traveller site requirements. It is not allocated for such use, no alternative site assessment has been provided, and it represents speculative, isolated countryside development. The Tetsworth Neighbourhood Plan (TNP) 2035 reinforces these constraints. Policies TET1 and TET3 restrict development outside the settlement boundary and require proposals to preserve and enhance local character. This application fails both.

## **7. Sustainability**

Since 2019, Tetsworth's sustainability has further declined: the mobile Post Office service ended in August 2024, public transport remains extremely limited, and the village has no medical, dental, or banking services. The primary school is at or near capacity, and employment opportunities are scarce. The proposed site lies 1km outside the village, accessible only by an unlit roadside path, and fails to meet sustainability criteria in national or local policy.

## **8. Application Validity**

Retrospective planning provisions are intended for minor, inadvertent breaches — not major unauthorised developments. Application P25/S2747/FUL contains significant errors and omissions, including: • Inaccurate and contradictory statements on the form. • Absence of a Design and Access Statement (mandatory for major development). • Lack of specialist reports on ecology, landscape, transport, and flood risk. These omissions render proper professional assessment impossible. The application should not have passed validation.

## **9. Conclusion**

Tetsworth Parish Council urges the Local Planning Authority to refuse planning application P25/S2747/FUL. The development represents a major unauthorised incursion into the countryside, repeating harms previously identified at appeal and conflicting with numerous policies of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 and Tetsworth Neighbourhood Plan 2035. TPC also calls on SODC Enforcement to take decisive action to restore the site to its lawful status. Failure to do so would set a dangerous precedent for unauthorised residential developments across the District, undermining confidence in the planning system.