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| Application Number | Expiry Date | Parish | Ward |
| 231531 | 15/03/2024 | Wokingham (Evendons East) | CP Evendons |

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| Applicant | Bewley Homes |
| Site Address | 171 Evendons Lane, Wokingham, RG41 4EH |
| Proposal | Outline application with all matters reserved except for access, for the proposed erection of a 64 bed care home (Use Class C2) with site access, parking, hard and soft landscaping and other associated works following demolition of existing commercial buildings. |
| Type | Outline application, all matters bar access reserved for later consideration. |
| Officer | Benjamin Hindle |
| Reason for determination by committee | Major application |

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| FOR CONSIDERATION BY | Planning Committee on Wednesday, 14 th February 2024 |
| REPORT PREPARED BY | Assistant Director – Place and Growth |

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| RECOMMENDATION | <p>That the committee authorize the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following three-tiered recommendation:</p> <p>A. Completion of a legal agreement (S106) to secure the following HoT (Head of Terms):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework Travel Plan (Including Minibus Provision) • Off-site Pedestrian Crossing (Infrastructure Improvements) • Biodiversity Net Gain • Employment Skills Plan <p>B. Conditions and informatives as set out in Appendix 1 (subject to any additions and updates agreed with the Assistant Director – Place and Growth between the date of the resolution and the issue of the decision):</p> |
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C. Alternative recommendation: That the committee authorise the Head of Development Management to refuse planning permission in the event of an S106 agreement not being completed to secure appropriate contributions within six months of the date of the committee resolution (unless a longer period is agreed by the Head of Development Management in consultation with the Chairman of Planning Committee) for the following reason:

1) In the absence of a planning obligation to secure suitable contributions / off site works for the following:

It has not been possible to secure the adequate mitigation put forward to justify development in an unsustainable location which fails to account for ecological enhancements. This is contrary to Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3, CP6 and TB23.

SUMMARY

This application relates to 171 Evendons Lane, Wokingham and is located within designated countryside directly adjacent to the major development location of Wokingham. This is an Outline application with all matters bar access reserved for later consideration pertaining to the erection of a 64-bedroom care home (Use Class C2) and associated services following the demolition of the existing commercial units know as 'The Evendons Centre'.

This application assesses the principle of development in this location, as well as the details of the proposed access. Whilst other matters have been considered, these are based on indicative detail and land use parameters which present to Officers and Members an option for how development would be accommodated on this site.

The application site as existing consists of a suis-generis commercial use within the designated countryside. The demolition of the existing commercial buildings and erection of a care home whilst achieving the policy's overarching aims, will be contrary to the spatial strategy of the local plan and fail to meet the relevant criterion contained within policy CP11. However, due to the site's existing land use, character, the nature and quantum of development proposed adjoining a major development location, the harm arising from this identified policy conflict will be limited. Additionally, the proposal will deliver specialist accommodation for older people and there is in-principle policy support for such developments in both national and local policies as detailed within the body of the report.

As established by previous appeal decisions on the site for C3 residential dwellings, the site is considered unsustainable, however, with due regard to the specific proposed C2 use and through negotiation with the applicant, it has been agreed to provide planning obligations relating to improving sustainable transport options (on-site staff minibus) and pedestrian route enhancements that will be secured by s106 legal agreement.

The location of the proposed access is deemed acceptable and is supported by past appeal decisions on the site and is secured by appropriate conditions.

In terms of visual impact on the landscape character, notwithstanding all matters reserved, the change within the existing landscape to facilitate the access will be moderate which will to some degree impact the character of the area. This is very much a localised impact which will cause wider character harm, particularly considering the significant landscape enhancement proposed including hedgerow net gain and associated soft landscaping. The indicative form is of a high-quality design and is supported by WBC's Landscape Architect as well as National Policy.

The proposal will not result in any significant negative impact on biodiversity including priority habitats, rather proposing significant biodiversity enhancements (c20% net gain).

The NPPF is clear that where development does not result in significant harm and is based on sustainable values, it should be supported. The proposal achieves wider compliance with the overall social, economic and environmental objectives of the NPPF by boosting the supply of specialist accommodation in a location directly abutting a major development location within the borough, it significantly improves on-site sustainability and provides opportunities to make the location more sustainable for the intended C2 use. The development will also make a contribution towards the Council's housing land supply (HLS).

Given the Council's current HLS of 3.2 years, the tilted balance is engaged by paragraph 11d(ii) of the NPPF and recognising past oversupply, is tempered. With this in mind, the limited harm caused by the conflict with development plan in terms of location outside any defined settlement limits does not significantly and adversely outweigh those identified benefits associated with the effective and efficient use of previously developed land to provide specialist care accommodation, contribution to housing supply, biodiversity and hedgerow net gain, employment generation, as well as character enhancements replacing the poor quality commercial units on site at current.

With the above in mind, the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions listed in this report and successful completion of a s106 legal agreement to secure a Framework Travel Plan, Employment Skills Plan, Off-site Highway improvements and Biodiversity Net Gain.

| Application Number | Description of Development | Decision/ Date |
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| 121432 | Application for a residential development of 43 dwellings (including the provision of 14 affordable homes), Provision of open space, a Local area of Play (LAP), creation of a new vehicular access onto Blagrove Lane, improved access onto Doles Lane. Demolition of Rosery Cottage and 171 Evendons Lane. | Withdrawn - 14/09/2012 |
| 132312 | Application for a residential development of 40 dwellings (including the provision of 16 affordable homes), provision of open space, a Local Area of Play (LAP), creation of a new vehicular access onto Blagrove Lane. Demolition of Rosery Cottage and 171 Evendons Lane. | Refused – 09/05/2013 Dismissed at appeal 17/10/2013 under APP/X0360/A/13/2198994 |

| DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION | |
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| Site Area | 0.8HA |
| Proposed bedspaces | 64 (35.5 dwelling equivalent) |
| Proposed density - dwellings/hectare | 44 |
| Previous land use | Suis-Generis commercial use |
| Proposed parking spaces | 35 Spaces |

CONSTRAINTS

- Countryside development location (Wokingham)
- Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
- Tree Preservation Order
- Thames Basin Heaths SPA Mitigation Zones – 7Km
- Potentially contaminated land consultation zone
- Local Plan Update proposed allocated site for C3 residential housing under number: 5WK023.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

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| Highways | No objection subject to conditions/ obligations |
| Trees and Landscape | No objection subject to conditions |
| Environmental Health | No objection subject to conditions |
| Drainage | No objection subject to conditions |
| WBC Ecology | No objection subject to conditions/ obligations |
| WBC Economic Prosperity and Place (Community Infrastructure) | No comments received |
| WBC Planning Policy | No comments received |
| Ecology (Newts) | No objection |
| Thames Water | No objection |
| Adult Social Care | No comments received |
| Berkshire Archaeology | No objection subject to condition |
| Crime Prevention Design Advisor | No comments received |
| WBC Built Heritage | No objection |
| Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue | Advisory comments received |
| Southern Gas Networks | No comments received |
| SSE Power Distribution | No comments received |
| Health and Wellbeing | No comments received |

REPRESENTATIONS

Wokingham Town Council

Though Wokingham Town Council requested until the 6th of February 2024 to respond to the revised plans consultation, given the Committee timescales this was unfortunately not possible, however, any comments arriving before Committee can be expressed verbally or within the Supplementary Agenda, therefore the Town Council will not be prejudiced. Officers however note an original objection received from Wokingham Town Council based on the original plans on the following grounds:

- Lack of infrastructure to support the development – Failure to comply with CP4 (*Officer note: CP4 relates to new infrastructure. This is provided in the form of pedestrian enhancements and sustainable transport services*).
- Impacts on highway network – Failure to comply with CP6. (*Officer note: The TRICS generated data show that there would be a net decrease in trip generation from the existing to proposed use, further WBC Highways did not object to the proposal*).
- Development outside of settlement limits, and impact to the countryside – Failure to comply with CP11. (*Officer note: this point is detailed within the ‘Principle of Development’ section within the report*).

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| <p>Ward Member(s)</p> | <p>Though no response was received following the receipt of revised plans, objection was originally received from Cllr Sarah Kerr objected to the application on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial burden on Wokingham Borough Council resulting from private care homes (<i>Officer note: this is not a material planning consideration</i>) - Unsustainable development location (<i>Officer note: this is addressed within the body of the report, particularly with reference to the sustainable transport improvements proposed</i>). - Speculative development with no end user (<i>Officer note: this is not a material planning consideration, nor reasonable to object on this basis. Private contractual agreements are not necessarily matters enclosed to the LPA prior to decision making</i>). - Lack of community engagement (<i>Officer note: a communications plan has been secured by condition, and the LPA undertook its due diligence in notifying neighbours upon submission. Further consultation needs do not form reason for refusal</i>). - Site is not featured for C2 use within the 'call for sites' (<i>Officer note: this is not a material planning consideration, nor should prevent its assessment</i>). - The proposal would create urban encroachment as concurred by the Planning Inspectorate (<i>Officer note: the proposal is located on partially previously developed, land. The Inspectorate has not considered</i> |
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the presence of a C2 care home in coming to their conclusions, the comments relate to a materially different and larger C3 housing application, including wider incursion into the countryside than is proposed within this application).

- Reference to SHLAA rather than HEELA (*Officer note: Officers have considered this C2 application on its own merits, which materially differs to the C3 HEELA and SHLAA comments).*
- Impacts to Landscape Character (*Officer note: WBC Trees and Landscape do not object to the application on LCA grounds).*
- Character impacts (*Officer note: this is an outline application with all matters reserved, therefore the principle of development solely is considered alongside access. Notwithstanding, the indicative plans show the ability for the proposal to sensitively interact with the verdant features on site which satisfies Officers that significant character impacts will not arise from the proposal, particularly given the low quality of the site as existing).*
- Safety concerns for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists (*Officer note: WBC Highways have assessed the application and has raised no objection to safety impacts).*
- No safe walking route for residents (*Officer note: the proposed parameters include amenity and garden space which provides opportunities for outdoor activities*

commensurate with the intended use. Further, it must be noted that given the specialist nature of this facility, it will be relatively self contained. Pedestrian enhancements are proposed (level crossing) which will permit connection with the pavement network).

- *Retail located 1.6km away, staff on lunch break unable to leave (Officer note: Care homes of this type are self contained offering in house food and drink for its workers. However, Officers note the presence of a café circa 30 metres from the application site).*
- *No reduction in the need for the use of the private car (Officer note: the applicant has proposed a reduction in car parking spaces under Borough parking standards and to improve on-site sustainability through the provision of a mini-bus service. This actively shows compliance with the aims of CP6 as concurred by WBC Highways).*
- *Sewage capacity concerns (Officer note: the statutory undertakers have a duty outside of the planning process to ensure connections are safe and have appropriate capacity for new connections. Thames Water have not raised objection).*
- *BREEAM 'very good' is insufficient (Officer note: Officers have secured BREEAM 'very good' compliance by condition. This is defined as "advanced good practice" and thus means that sustainability has been considered a priority for the project).*

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of need (<i>Officer note: The Planning Inspectorate, the Council and Applicant's evidence though varying in final figures, all outline the fact that there is a notable under provision of specialist care facilities. This application seeks to contribute towards meeting this need for specialist dementia care.</i>) |
| Neighbour(s) | <p>Objections have been received from 21 residents. The objections are summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Character impacts resulting from building mass and height (<i>Officer note: the detail on the bulk, mass, height, design and layout are reserved for later approval, however, the indicative 2.5 storey form is considered by Officers to mark improvements to the quality of the environment considering the architecturally low quality commercial buildings on site at current as concurred by some residents. The indicative form shows ridge height marginally lower than surrounding properties.</i>) - Safety concerns for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists (<i>Officer note: WBC Highways have considered the application and do not object to it on any safety grounds.</i>) - Speculative concerns that C3 use will replace the proposed C2 use (<i>Officer note: this is not a material planning consideration, and Members must assess the application submitted without any speculation.</i>) - Outline applications do not contain sufficient detail (<i>Officer note: outline applications are a</i> |

valid planning application as per the Town and Country Planning Act. This is not a material planning consideration).

- Loss of fixed telephone/broadband connection (*Officer note: it is the responsibility of statutory undertakers to ensure wired phone lines/ broadband are correctly linked to dwellings, not the responsibility of an applicant).*
- Neighbouring amenity (*Officer note: this has been considered in the body of the report, and all minimum separation distances have been doubled. There is no objection in regards to overlooking, overbearing or loss of light).*
- Traffic generation (*Officer note: the TRICS data submitted shows that trip generation of the proposed use, will be lower than the existing commercial use on site. WBC Highways have confirmed this information is acceptable).*
- Reduction in green space (*Officer note: the site is partially previously developed land, and only the north-east of the site is classed as greenfield land. Notwithstanding, on balance, the minor incursion into greenfield land does outweigh the benefits the proposal presents).*
- Impacts to hedgerow and trees (*Officer note: WBC Trees and Landscape have considered the proposal and do not object to the application).*
- Flood risk (*Officer note: WBC Drainage have considered the application and do not object to it on any flooding grounds).*

- Highway visibility concerns (*Officer note: WBC Highways have considered the application and did not raise objection in regards to visibility splays*).
- Unachievable Travel Plan (*Officer note: WBC Highways have considered the application and did not raise objection in regards to the submitted Framework Travel Plan which will be secured via S106*).
- Noise impacts (*Officer note: given the large indicated separation distances double the recommended distance within the Borough Design Guide, and self contained nature of the C2 care home, there are no objection in regards to noise impacts*).
- Design concerns (*Officer note: whilst the plans submitted are indicative given this is an outline application, they provide a high quality arrangement that is suitable for the site's semi-rural location on the edge of settlement limits*).
- Lack of need (*Officer note: The Planning Inspectorate, the Council and Applicant's evidence though varying in final figure, all outline the fact that there is a notable under provision of specialist care facilities. This application seeks to contribute towards meeting this need for specialist dementia care.*)
- Parking provision insufficient (*Officer note: WBC Highways have considered the application and view the indicative parking provision as sufficiently justified using TRICS data*).

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Loss of employment (<i>Officer note: the proposal will see a net employment gain of 38 FTE from 12 to 50 FTE</i>).- Biodiversity impact (<i>Officer note: the application would give rise to significant biodiversity net gain which weighs in favour of the proposal on the planning balance</i>).- Encroachment into the countryside (<i>Officer note: the majority of the site is previously developed land, which forms part of existing ribbon development along Evendons Lane. This does not constitute excessive encroachment</i>). |
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| PLANNING POLICY | | |
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| National Policy | NPPF | National Planning Policy Framework |
| | NDG | National Design Guide |
| Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010 | CP1 | Sustainable Development |
| | CP2 | Inclusive Communities |
| | CP3 | General Principles for Development |
| | CP4 | Infrastructure Requirements |
| | CP5 | Housing mix, density and affordability |
| | CP6 | Managing Travel Demand |
| | CP7 | Biodiversity |
| | CP8 | Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area |
| | CP9 | Scale and Location of Development Proposals |
| | CP10 | Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network |
| | CP11 | Countryside |
| | CP15 | Employment Development |
| Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014 | CC01 | Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development |
| | CC02 | Development Limits |
| | CC03 | Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping |
| | CC04 | Sustainable Design and Construction |
| | CC05 | Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks |
| | CC06 | Noise |
| | CC07 | Parking |
| | CC09 | Development and Flood Risk (from all sources) |
| | CC10 | Sustainable Drainage |
| | TB07 | Internal Space standards |
| | TB12 | Employment Skills Plan |
| | TB21 | Landscape Character |
| | TB23 | Biodiversity and Development |
| Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) / other | | Borough Design Guide Planning Practice Guidance |

Description of Development:

1. The proposal relates to outline development for the demolition of an existing commercial buildings 'The Evendons Centre' and associated outbuildings and the erection of a 64-bed specialist dementia Care Home with associated access, services, parking and landscaping. All matters bar access are to be reserved for future consideration by the Local Planning Authority.

The Site and the Surrounding:

2. The proposal site is situated on a large plot of land on the edge of the Wokingham settlement of approximately 0.8 hectares in area, located on the western side of Blagrove Lane and the northern edge of Evendons Lane. It is currently occupied by a suis generis collection of commercial buildings known as 'The Evendons Centre' which has several outbuildings covering the majority of the site. The topography of the site is relatively flat, though a raise in levels is seen from west to east, particularly across Blagrove Lane. Mature trees and hedgerows occupy the northern, southern and eastern boundaries which serve as a visual and spatial buffer.
3. The site is located on the edge of the major development location of Wokingham within the designated Countryside as per CP9 of the Core Strategy. The site and proposal represent infill ribbon re-development with the residential form along Evendons Lane and part of Blagrove Lane sited to the east of the site, and Redlands Place residential development sited to the west of the site extending from the settlement. The relationship of the application site constituting infill re-development is shown below in figure 1, with the Major Development Location of Wokingham being shown in purple, the application site in red and adjoining residential development and built form shown in yellow. The areas without colour mark the designated countryside:



Figure 1: The site's proximity to adjoining residential development.

Outline Applications:

4. The application has been submitted in outline form, with all matters reserved bar access, therefore the principle of development and point of access in this location can only be assessed.
5. Information about the proposed use or uses, and the amount of development proposed for each use, is necessary to allow consideration of an application for outline planning permission.
6. Unless the applicant has indicated that those details are submitted "for illustrative purposes only" (or has otherwise indicated that they are not formally part of the application, which is the case here), the local planning authority must treat them as part of the development in respect of which the application is being made; the local planning authority cannot reserve that matter by condition for subsequent approval.

Principle of Development:

7. The starting point for decision making is the development plan. Section 70[2] of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 & 38[6] of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the Development Plan consists of the Core Strategy 2010; MDD Local Plan 2014; and Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (Joint Plan) (2023) which are read alongside the

NPPF. The MDD Local Plan policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

8. Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy and CC02 of the MDD Local Plan states that proposals will be permitted within development limits where the scale of the application reflects the facilities and services within the settlement. The development plan steers most developments to sustainable Major settlements with the best services, facilities and infrastructure. The definition of development limits recognises the consistent approach in planning to identify appropriate and sustainable areas for development.

Countryside

9. The site is located just outside of any defined settlement limits within designated countryside as defined by Core Strategy CP9. Therefore, Core Strategy policy CP11 is relevant to assess the principle of development in this instance. Policy CP11 is a restrictive policy designed to protect the separate identity of settlements i.e. prevent settlement coalition and to maintain the quality of the environment. Policy CP11 states that proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted except:
 - 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;*
 - i) *In the case of replacement dwellings the proposal must:*
 - ii) *Bring about environmental improvements; or*
 - 5) *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.*
10. Parts 1),2) 3), 4), 5) and 7) of CP11 are not applicable in this instance.
11. The proposal is for a specialist care home (Use Class C2, residential institution) which provides for older people who have specialist care and support needs. Annex

2 of the NPPF defines 'older people' in planning terms as *"people over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs."*

12. The Borough has been demonstrated to have a net need in care home spaces, in particular for those of specialist nature which is both supported by the LPA's own evidence and within the 'Assessment of Need' submitted by the applicant. Though it can be argued that the proposal is compliant with CP11(6) in that it is an essential facility, given the proposal's private nature, it does not cater to all members of the community. Furthermore, notwithstanding the Borough's need for additional care facilities, the proposal does not comply with any of the criteria within CP11.
13. The qualifying criteria contained within CP11 should not however be viewed in isolation, as due regard should be had to the wider aims of what the policy is seeking to achieve. The aim of CP11 is to protect the separate identity of settlements and to maintain the quality of the environment. The proposal would make use of previously developed land (as supported by paragraph 89 of the NPPF 2023), would not excessively encroach away from the existing commercial building complex, nor would promote any settlement coalescence given the presence of urbanising form on site at current. Furthermore, it should be noted that the wording of CP11 acknowledges that there may be circumstances where such development may be permitted. The policy states *"proposals outside of settlement limits will not normally [Officer Emphasis] be permitted"*.
14. Given the existing buildings on site forming 'The Evendons Centre' are of low architectural quality and in poor condition, notwithstanding all matters reserved, it is reasonable to conclude that the quality of the localised environment would be notably improved by a purpose built, landscaped care home in this location. The proposed C2 residential institution use cannot be considered a less compatible use than the existing suis-generis commercial vehicle movement business in this location and in proximity to residential uses. Therefore, positive weight is afforded to the principle land use in this context.
15. Whilst the proposal does not conflict with the overall objective of CP11 in preventing harmful encroachment or coalescence, it remains to be the case that it fails to qualify for any of the exception criteria as in conflict. In recognising this conflict, there is a need to weigh up the harm caused by this conflict against any other relevant material considerations. This balancing exercise will be returned to in later sections and against the requirements of paragraph 11d of the NPPF 2023.

Emerging Local Plan Update

16. The Local Plan Update (LPU), which will supersede the adopted Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery (MDD) local plans, is at a relatively early stage of preparation. Public consultation of the Draft Local Plan under Regulation 18 was undertaken twice: the Draft Plan (2020) and the Revised Growth Strategy (2021). Part of the current application site was promoted for C3 housing by the landowner as part of the LPU call for sites under 5WK023. Whilst useful context, the LPU is at an early stage of preparation and attracts limited weight in determination of the current application.

Joint Minerals and Waste Plan

17. The Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (Joint Plan) was adopted by Wokingham Borough Council on 19 January 2023. The Joint Plan identifies site allocations and extensions to help provide a future supply of sand and gravel extraction. However, despite these allocations, there remains a shortfall of supply during the plan period. The policy response to address the shortfall is the identification of a 'Minerals Safeguarding Area' (MSA), where Policy M2 of the plan applies, and also an 'Area of Search' where Policy M4 applies. This approach is to demonstrate the potential for, in effect, windfall provision within the Plan area.
18. The site is located outside the MSA and therefore it is not considered commercially viable or suitable for prior extraction and removal.

Need Analysis

19. The proposal is for the construction of a specialist Care Home (older persons' accommodation) and the Core Strategy Policy CP2 (Inclusive Communities) of the Core Strategy (2010) seeks to ensure that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities, including facilities for aged persons. Specifically, CP2a supports proposals that address the requirements of an ageing population, particularly in terms of housing, health and well-being. This is supported by Paragraph 001 Reference ID: 63-001-20190626 of the National Planning Practice Guidance, which outlines that housing for older people is a critical part of supply.
20. The local policy position ensures that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities to meet long-term needs. Policy TB09(d) (Residential accommodation for vulnerable groups) of the adopted MDD local plan (2014) supports, in principle, proposals that provide accommodation for specialist needs, including '*purpose-built accommodation*' for the elderly.
21. Though finer details will need to be secured at Reserved Matters stage to ensure the building layout suits the intended users, the development proposal in principle would be consistent with the classification of 'residential care homes and nursing homes' as defined by the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) due to the level and type of care provided for meeting all activities of daily living, specifically falling within the C2 use class, rather than the C3 use class.
22. Paragraph 2.40 of the Core Strategy (2010) refers to the Council's latest Older People's Housing Strategy which sets out the requirements for specialist housing for older people. The proposal would provide specialist accommodation that would help provide for the varied needs of the local community, in accordance with Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy.
23. Further, as part of the evidence to support the Draft Local Plan (2020), the council commissioned Opinion Research Services to produce a Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) (January 2020). The LHNA considers specific types of accommodation for different groups, including older people/vulnerable people in the borough. The LHNA identified a future need for C2 provision equivalent to 527 dwellings, which represents 949 bedspaces, to be provided within the plan period

(2018-2036). It should be noted, however, that there are various method/approaches of undertaking such analysis which can lead to various outcomes due to the use of standardised rates of access to specific types of accommodation which may not be reflective of access within Wokingham Borough, distinguishing a difference between net need, and acute need.

24. Wokingham Borough Council's Adult Social Care Team presented their own estimates for the need for Class C2 bedspaces at 158 over the period 2018-2035 within the dismissed X0360/W/22/3308965 appeal to Sonning Golf Club on the 1st of March 2023. This was based on monitoring information and known vacancies. Following informal discussion with Adult Social Care, this estimate has not changed. However, the Inspector noted that the *"reasons for bed vacancies in the existing care home stock were cited, but these vacancies have to be placed in the context of a current post Covid recovery and a future ageing population"* which impacted WBC's supply position, subsequently arriving at the conclusion that *"there does appear a need for high quality care home accommodation and choice within the Borough that is not yet being met or reconciled through planning policy or decisions."*
25. As well as within APP/X0360/W/22/3308965 as summarized above, the Inspector determining appeal APP/X0360/W/22/3298882 to Woodside & Wayside House similarly identified an unmet need for high quality care home accommodation and choice within the borough which is not yet being reconciled through planning policy or decisions. In this regard, the proposal will deliver 64 specialist care bedspaces in line with Core Strategy policies CP2 and CP5 which is considered to weigh in favour of the scheme in the overall planning balance. Given the Inspector's position on WBC's own supply information, there is a degree of uncertainty in this position and weight afforded to these conclusions is reduced accordingly.
26. Notwithstanding the Borough's own need calculations, a comprehensive planning needs assessment was undertaken by Carterwood in May 2023. This objective assessment of need has been provided as part of the application, which reviews existing provision within the Borough and overarching need. The assessment is based on a number of assumptions including:
 - Two catchments of need have been assessed, one being a 5 mile radius from the application site (inter authority) at 171 Evendons Lane and two being the wider Borough need figure.
 - Two different assessments of need have been provided, one relating to specialist dementia care homes and two being all beds.
 - Total market need based on ONS data projected to 2026 and Age Standardised Demand (ASD) rates.
 - Occupancy capacity allowance adjustment adopted at 'effective full capacity' level of 92.3 per cent.
 - Carterwood's COVID-19 forecasting model assumes historic occupancy levels will have returned by the year of our assessment with no material impact on need.
 - Planned supply based upon individual analysis of each scheme and

assessment of likely potential development completion. All pending beds have been individually assessed based upon the likelihood of imminent development.

- The need analysis excludes the subject scheme.
27. The applicant's need assessment arrives at the conclusions that considering the current level of supply, there is a net additional need of 475 elderly en-suite spaces and 764 elderly wet-room spaces required within the catchment, and 235 elderly en-suite spaces and 480 elderly wet-room spaces within the Borough. In terms of specialist dementia care as is proposed to form part of the use (as per condition 34), there is a net additional need of 261 elderly en-suite spaces and 319 elderly wet-room spaces within the catchment, and 33 elderly en-suite spaces and 77 elderly wet-room spaces needed within the Wokingham Borough by 2026. Given the degree of uncertainty over WBC's own data in recent appeals for similar development, Officers are inclined to afford greater weight to the need figures expressed by the applicant in the absence of any more independently verified and up-to-date evidence.
 28. Paragraphs 63 and 66 of the NPPF (2023) recognise that planning decisions should consider the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community (including older people). The proposal effectively contributes to meeting the needs of older people via high quality, specialist bedspaces. This accords within both paragraph 63 and 66.
 29. Paragraph 84 of the NPPF seeks to avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as a rural worker's dwelling, optimal viable use of a heritage asset, reuse of redundant or disused buildings, and subdivision of an existing building or if the building is of exceptional design. The site is located adjacent to settlement limits, including large amounts of residential dwellings on partially previously developed land. As such, the proposal will not result in an isolated new building and will comply with paragraph 84 of the NPPF.

Housing Land Supply

30. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Where there is no 5YHLS or where the most important policies for determining the application are out-of-date, the 'tilted balance' should be engaged. Paragraph 11d states that permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole.
31. The Council's most recent published full assessment of the housing land supply position is the 'WBC Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement at 31st March 2023' which concluded a demonstrable deliverable housing land supply of 3.2 years, excluding any consideration of past over delivery. As such, the tilted balance, as advocated by the NPPF, will be engaged. However, it is a matter of fact that housing completions within Wokingham Borough have significantly exceeded all assessments of housing need. The strong performance on housing delivery is a material factor that should be considered alongside the technical shortfall in deliverable housing land supply, thereby tempering the tilted balance.
32. In this instance, the proposal would replace the existing commercial buildings with

a 64- bedroom care home. The PPG in the 'Housing for Older people and disabled people' has clarified that account can be taken of communal and older persons accommodation within the housing land supply and the ratio is the net increase in number of bedrooms divided by the average number of adults in households in England (which is 1.8 people as per the latest census data).

33. In this instance, the proposal is for 64-bed care home that would be counted as 35.5 dwellings equivalent (net increase of 35.5 units) within a parcel of partially previously developed land. Whilst not substantial, the provision of additional 35.5 equivalent market dwellings will contribute to meeting the Council's 5-YHLS position and is afforded moderate weight in the overall balance.

Character of the Area:

34. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy states that permission will be granted for developments that maintain and enhance the quality of the environment and encompasses sustainable values.
35. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high-quality design. The indicative form though larger than surrounding residential development, does not mark excessive encroachment, is of an appropriate scale and mass given the Borough's need, is subservient to residential form in its height, promotes a more compatible use adjoining residential development and is of high-quality design. The proposal is considered to comply with CP3 in the above respects.
36. The site is located on the western side of Blagrove Lane in designated countryside but directly abuts the settlement boundary of Wokingham, which is a major development location spanning to the east. The character as existing along Blagrove Lane is a mixture of rural and built, spanning naturally verdant features, established native hedgerows and provides open views to the north-east of fields which will not be hindered by the proposal.
37. Notwithstanding the rural character of the majority of Blagrove Lane, there is the notable presence of development and urbanising features, logically extending from Evendons Lane. This directly faces the application site, and the indicative layout shows the form not exceeding the line of dwellings on Blagrove Lane, thus containing development in this location and preventing sprawl to the more visually and spatially valuable north-east of the site when contrasted to the previously developed south and west of the site. In terms of Evendons Lane, this is a built up, non-rural, long residential road consisting of a mixture of 2 and 2.5 storey dwellings of varied character types, ages, extensions and alterations both recently and historically implemented.
38. Whilst all matters bar access are reserved for later approval, to facilitate the 64 beds (all of which must comply with and ideally exceed internal spatial standards), it is expected that the proposal will have 2.5 storeys and will be to some degree more prominent than the existing single-storey steep pitched roof commercial buildings. However, as indicatively shown within the CGI viewpoints, whilst a relatively large building when compared to the surrounding vernacular, it is well designed and integrates seamlessly into its edge of settlement context. Further,

though the proposal is likely to be 2.5 storeys in order to facilitate the quantum of development, it retains a comparable ridge height to nearby two-storey properties such as 'Meadow View' and 'Viewlands' east of the site and the dwellings at 'Redlands Place' to the west through the use of dormers. This combined with lower land levels on the application site will accommodate the form into the landscape without acting as a visual landmark.

39. Referring to the indicative layout, the proposed building will cover circa 19% of the site area and by reason of required scale, will to some degree depart from the general character of the surrounding area which are modest sized detached, semi-detached, terraced and bungalow dwellings on spacious plots. However, the development has been indicated to be contained in one building which will be located within a large plot, which in terms of plot coverage sits similarly to 'Viewlands' and 'Meadow View' of Blagrove Lane as well as the majority of the vernacular along Evendons Lane.
40. Moreover, the proposal as indicatively shown will maintain acceptable separation distances from neighbouring properties (c34 metres front to flank at the closest). Consequently, whilst Officers appreciate the proposal to some degree deviates from established character of the immediate area, the additional built mass necessary to facilitate the institutional form of development, will not detrimentally impact the urban grain of the area by reason of sensitive siting, moderate plot coverage and adequate separation distances.
41. The proposal with the indicative layout would provide additional hard surfacing to the north to provide parking and access arrangements. This encroaches into the undeveloped grassland north of the site by a maximum of circa 40 metres from the existing building. Given the site's scale, this does not constitute excessive encroachment in line with policy CP11, which though to comply with CP11 must be accepted in line with CP11(1) and CP11(3) is a useful tool to assess visual and spatial impact of a proposal.
42. Notwithstanding layout and scale being a matter reserved, this spatial encroachment though not deemed excessive, will cause a minor degree of harm to the character and appearance of the area which is tempered by virtue of retained and enhanced vegetative screening. The existing trees and hedgerows along the boundaries of the site which are to be enhanced further provide a significant degree of containment and visual screening and as a result, this harm will be localised to the site and not prominent from the public realm along Blagrove Lane or Evendons Lane. The existing buffer of the parking area which is to be retained and enhanced is shown below in figure 2:



Figure 2 – Blagrove Lane hedgerow facing indicative parking court

43. The proposed development would retain and strengthen most of the peripheral landscaping. Although there would be some degree of tree and hedgerow loss to accommodate the proposed access along Blagrove Lane, this is adequately compensated for and as a result, the character of the verdant boundary treatment will largely remain intact. This is further discussed within the 'Trees and Landscape' section of this report.

Density:

44. Policy CC02 of the MDD Local Plan states that development at the edge of settlements is acceptable where it is demonstrated that it is within development limits and respects the transition between the built-up area and the open countryside by taking account of the character of the adjacent countryside and landscape.
45. The site is located within a designated countryside location but adjoins settlement boundary to the east as per figure 1. In this instance, the proposal is for 64- bed care home that would be counted as 35.5 dwellings equivalent within a site of approximately 0.8ha area, resulting in a residential density of 44 dwellings per hectare. This would be higher than the existing density along Blagrove Lane, Evendons Lane and Redlands Place. By way of an example, using a sample of Evendons Lane (numbers 113-141) the resulting existing density sits at 26 dwellings per hectare. Whilst density is recognised as being a useful indicator of site capacity, it is not generally a good indicator of the likely form, quality or appropriateness of any scheme. As such it must be viewed in tandem with other policies concerning design, form and impact. In context to this proposal. Use class C2 and C3 are materially different and given the operation and practical needs for of C2 residential institutions, a higher density is entirely expected. Furthermore, a replication is the existing density along Evendons Lane would not make the most effective use of this part previously developed land as advocated by the NPPF in significantly boosting the supply of housing.

46. Compact development of a higher density as proposed in this instance further provides opportunities for social cohesion which is increasingly important within specialist care homes. The National Design Guide echoes this importance within paragraph 64, in stating “*Compact forms of development bring people together.*” In this regard, the proposal by virtue of its compact design provides significant environmental and social benefits, preventing urban sprawl and providing enhanced opportunities for social cohesion. This is particularly important bearing in mind the intended occupants. Therefore, considering the intended use, to the density is not considered to undermine the aims of policy CC02.
47. The location of the site is also important in providing a transition or edge of settlement character in line with Policy CC02 of MDD Local Plan. Currently, the site acts as a transition between a major development location to the east and countryside to the west albeit not visually or spatially given the presence of development as existing. As can be seen from Figure 1, the western side of the site includes existing residential developments and other built form encroaching circa 140 metres further than the western edge of the application site which contains built form itself. Accordingly, whilst CC02 may designate the site as ‘countryside’ in character terms, it does not represent open countryside nor sport many of the characteristics one would associate with the countryside. Consequently, the importance of the site as a transitional edge is reduced and weighed accordingly tempered.
48. In addition to the modest increase in density, the proposal would result in an increase in the number of users from a maximum of 12 (12 full-time equivalent as existing) to a maximum of 97 (64 residents assuming full occupancy and a maximum of 33 full-time equivalent staff). Given the self-contained nature of the site/use, the fact that sustainable transport models have been agreed in principle (mini-bus service for employees to be secured via S106) and adequate plot size with separation distances in excess of BDG recommendations, the intensification of use would not be readily apparent from surrounding areas and the harm would be localised and limited to inside of the application site.

General Building Form and Design:

49. The National Design Guide (2021) (“NDG”) provides general good practice guidance for planning new development. Given there are no specific Design Codes applicable to the site, the NDG alongside the Wokingham Borough Design Guide (“BDG”) provides useful guidance in considering design, scale, bulk and mass. Though Officers note the plans submitted are indicative, they have been assessed against local and national policy as follows.
50. Paragraph 59 of the NDG states “*Where the scale or density of new development is very different to the existing place, it may be more appropriate to create a new identity rather than to scale up the character of an existing place in its context. New character may also arise from a response to how today’s lifestyles could evolve in the future, or to the proposed method of development and construction.*”
51. To facilitate a care home of the proposed quantum, it is reasonable to expect the eventual form to differ in character and appearance from the existing residential vernacular along Evendons Lane. However, difference in scale and design should

in certain contexts be viewed as an opportunity, particularly as the indicative ridge height resembles that of a two-storey building, rather than a threestorey as many objections have raised.

52. Building on paragraph 59, paragraph 60 of the NDG states *“Where the character of an existing place has limited or few positive qualities, then a new and positive character will enhance its identity.”* Applying this directly to the application site, which at current features an unsightly commercial building complex within predominantly residential area, the introduction of more compatible C2 use of new design and energy standards effectively complements and transitions the site’s nature as a connecting link between a major development location and the defined countryside.
53. The existing dwellings within the immediate neighbourhood comprise of modest two to 2.5 storey houses and chalet bungalows with simple hipped and pitched roofs on top. In contrast, utilising the indicative form, the proposal would be a block of 64 bedrooms arranged within three floors over 2.5 storeys. To facilitate an acceptable internal layout, the proposed building will be larger when directly compared to the existing buildings. The scale and massing of the structure will accordingly be at odds with the modest size properties in the locality.
54. It is acknowledged that all matters pertaining to scale and layout are reserved, given the intended C2 use, it is recognised that the proposal will result in an increase in bulk, mass, width and height compared to the existing commercial complex and associated outbuildings as well as other properties in the neighbourhood to provide a high standard of internal amenity for future residents and staff. However, the topography east of the site rises is level, meaning the dwellings facing the application site will sit marginally higher than the indicative form.
55. Consequently, the additional building height will not be readily apparent from the Blagrove Lane and Evendons Lane street scene, further screened by retained and enhanced landscaping. This said, clearer views will be afforded from the proposed access, wherein some vegetation requires removal/ trimming to facilitate safe visibility.
56. In terms of building design, the indicative CGI plans show a mixture of red brick and timber cladding which positively responds to the verdant character and marks high quality development (See Figure 3 below). The overall built mass will be broken up by the use of features such tiered roofing, protruding gables and terraces as well as the shape of the building which is an irregular ‘I’. These features and design cues provide examples of high architectural value in place of existing concrete buildings of poor and utilitarian design.



Figure 3 - Indicative form and material palette

Landscape Character

57. The site falls within the J2 Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay Landscape Character Area (LCA) as prescribed by the Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment 2019. This outlines a moderate landscape quality.
58. The landscape strategy for LCA J2 is to maintain the landscape character of the Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay the following strategy is required: to conserve and enhance the remaining rural character of the landscape.
59. The key aspects to be conserved and enhanced are the field pattern with mature hedgerow trees, wetland and woodland habitats, rural lanes and historic features. In terms of development, the aim is to integrate new development into its landscape setting and retain the open and rural character of the landscape between settlements.
60. Though all matters are reserved, the indicative CGI's and landscape strategy submitted alongside this application at your Officer's request show how the proposed form can positively respond to the landscape character area and integrate the building into the verdant site setting. Further to revisions, decreases in indicative height to 2.5 stories without raising ridge height above that of a standard two-storey dwelling, decreases in footprint and improvements in indicative design, WBC Trees and Landscape concur that the proposal would not detrimental impact the landscape character area, and has the potential to enhance it subject to the Reserved Matters following the indicative form.

Indicative Visual Impact

61. In visual terms, the site has a distinctly wooded appearance on the boundary along Blagrove and Evendons Lane which is dominated by mature native hedgerow and large mature trees. Some of the other trees within the site's boundary are also seen from various public viewpoints to varying degrees which help screen the existing

commercial complex. The proposed care home would therefore be visible to a minor degree from local public vantage points, albeit well notably softened and screened given the retention and enhancement of the hedgerow. This enhancement is secured via condition.

62. The majority of the site will be well screened with landscape enhancements provided, however the location of the access would require the reduction in some existing landscaping, providing clear views of the site from Blagrove Lane. This is shown within Figure 3 below:



Figure 4 – CGI Viewpoint from Blagrove Lane

63. As Figure 4 above shows, the site will be visible from the proposed access point off Blagrove Lane, however the existing 'Ewendons Centre' access off Ewendons Lane will be stopped up and replaced with an enhanced native hedgerow. Therefore, the combined magnitude of change for the site as a whole is moderate in character terms. The existing access to be stopped up and replaced with native hedgerow is shown below in Figure 5:



Figure 5 – Existing Access, Evendons Lane (to be stopped up and planted)

64. Notwithstanding all matters being reserved in terms of physical built form, the submitted parameters plan identifies the location of built form, specifically outlining a notable set back from the site boundaries. With the sensitive anticipated siting in mind, the massing of the proposed building would not stand out as an alien feature in this landscape.
65. Further, the indicative CGI's (which Officers would expect the future Reserved Matters application to follow) show the built form broken up by vertical and horizontal detailing breaks, including the roof form which would further reduce the massing and prominence of the building in the context of the site.
66. The siting and indicative form should be read in the context of the levels on site, particularly the increase in levels from the eastern boundary of the site across Blagrove Lane of which resulting topography would contribute positively to reduce the visual impact of the proposal. Further, as scale and layout are matters reserved for later approval, the LPA will be able to scrutinise the final form to ensure that no significant character harm arises from the proposal.

Sustainable Design and Climate Change:

67. Wokingham Borough Council has declared a Climate Emergency and prepared a Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP, third progress report, 2022) which guides the Council's actions in response to climate emergency. In December 2022, WBC has also published a Climate Change Interim Policy Position Statement (CCIPPS) which defines the Council's position relating to climate change as applicable to the planning process.
68. Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan covers sustainable design and construction, requiring that *“All new non-residential proposals of more than 100 sq m gross non-residential floorspace shall at least: a) Achieve the necessary mandatory Building Research Establishment Assessment Method (BREEAM) requirements or any future national equivalent.”*

69. Policy CC05 of the MDD encourages renewable energy and decentralised energy networks. It requires a minimum 10% reduction in carbon emissions for developments of 10+ dwellings or in excess of 1000 m² floor space. This policy is clarified as follows in the CCIPPS *“the policy requirement for 10% energy reduction through renewable / low carbon technologies is expected to be achieved in addition to the uplifted emissions improvements required through Building Regulations (as updated in June 2022).”*
70. Policies CC04 and CC05 are further supported by R21 of the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD which requires that new development contribute to environmental sustainability and the mitigation of climate change.
71. Paragraph 157 of the NPPF states that plans should *“shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure”* and paragraphs 157 – 158 deal with individual development and emphasise the importance of energy efficient, low carbon development.
72. The overarching aspiration for the proposals is to reduce the need for energy through passive measures including form, orientation and fabric resulting in a BREEAM ‘Very Good’ rating. The strategies suggested by the applicant include insulation of the external envelope, high quality glazing, use of sustainable energy systems (such as PV arrays and air source heat pumps) and good ventilation to reduce overheating.
73. A condition has been applied and agreed by the applicant to secure BREEAM ‘Very Good’ or above which will ensure any new development is highly energy efficient and contributes to a net decrease in carbon consumption. “Very Good” is the third-highest BREEAM certification level. It is defined as “advanced good practice” and thus means that sustainability has been considered a priority for the project, but not all the expected methods or concepts have been applied.

Building Accessibility:

74. The proposed building will be sited on relatively flat ground. Whilst no detailed section through the entrance of the building is provided given the site’s nature as an outline with all matters bar access reserved, it is considered that due to the site’s profile, it is possible to create a ramped access into the building from the parking and front court.
75. The indicative site layout and parking plan shows that disabled parking spaces can be comfortably accommodated on site, however, the specific details of siting will be reserved for later approval both within a future reserved matters application and conditions application.
76. The future reserved matters must detail Internal lifts that can accommodate a wheelchair user, as well as provide minimum internal amenity of at least 12m² (discussed further in the body of this report) with level entrances.

Location Sustainability:

77. Policy CP11 refers to preventing development outside of settlement limits as they are generally not well located for facilities & service and to prevent reliance on private motor cars which CP6 of the Core Strategy aims to promote a modal shift away from.
78. In terms of national policy, paragraph 114 of the NPPF seeks to promote sustainable travel in decisions with consideration of:
 - a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;
 - b) safe and suitable access to the site that are achieved for all users;
 - c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code 46; and
 - d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.
79. This is reinforced in Paragraph 124, which refers to the “*availability and capacity of infrastructure and services...and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use*” (124c).
80. A sustainability assessment has been carried out for the site. Due to the nature of the development (care home), the assessment provided has been carried out in relation to members of staff rather than the eventual occupiers themselves.
81. Officers note that the nearest bus stops are on Finchampstead Road some 800m from the site. These are served by Bus Routes 125, 125A and 125B service between Wokingham and Crowthorne, offering 1 service an hour during the peak periods, 3 journeys off peak and on Saturdays. There are however no evening or Sunday services.
82. On the eastern side of Blagrove Lane, there is a pavement down to Evendons Lane, which continues to Finchampstead Road. The route is illuminated by street lights and affords good natural surveillance by virtue of the adjoining residential dwellings. WBC Highways concur with Officers that this would be an attractive and safe route to walk.
83. Alternatively, there is a 1.3km walk up Blagrove Lane to Barkham Road to catch the No 3 service between Arborfield and Wokingham. This runs an hourly service Monday to Saturday however there are no evening or Sunday service.
84. The route up Blagrove Lane is a narrow road unlit and with no pavement for a distance of around 600m until Robert Grove. From there until Barkham Road the road is lit, with a pavement and is overlooked. Though access is afforded via this route, it would not be a desirable route to walk.

85. In terms of rail transport, whilst the nearest Stations (Wokingham and Crowthorne) are within an acceptable cycle ride, the route would not be classed as attractive to cyclists giving the range of topography and on-street car parking along Evendons Lane.
86. The Planning Inspector at the appeal for 40 houses on the site in 2013 (X0360/A/13/2198994) recognised that the site was not in a sustainable location, however, did acknowledge that “*cycling distances to facilities would be acceptable*”.
87. Since X0360/A/13/2198994, there have been two recent appeals on a nearby sites, Hutts Farm Cottage 200930 December 2020 and 212832 January 2022, both appeals were dismissed, including unsustainability as a reason for refusal which the Inspector upheld. However, these decisions were made in relation to C3 residential development which would result in a notably greater trip generation than a C2 relatively self-contained care home.
88. The C2 use and its occupier’s needs as a self-contained facility must be assessed individually and therefore, the Inspector’s judgement should only be attributed limited weight when assessing this proposal.
89. Following negotiation with the applicant, to improve the on-site sustainability and to promote wider connections with other methods of active transport, it has been agreed that a minibus will be provided to pick up staff from a set location/s such as Wokingham and Crowthorne Station and take them to the site and to do so at the end of the shift which significantly reduces trip generation and subsequently improves the sustainability of the site. This has been agreed by the applicant to be secured through the s106 legal agreement as a part of the travel plan obligation.
90. Whilst the site abuts a major development location, it is nonetheless considered to be unsustainably located for residential development. However, in the context of the proposed self-contained C2 use, given the notable improvements in on-site sustainability to reduce the use of the private motor vehicle for fixed term employees, this is considered to overcome any objection that may have formed grounds for refusal previously in relation to materially different uses in this location.
91. By providing an active mini-bus service interlinked with convenient public transport connections (namely Wokingham and Crowthorne station as per the submitted Travel Plan), the applicant has sustainability catered for individuals most likely to travel to and from the site, consequently reducing trip generation and the need for staff to enter and exit the site via car. The development would thereby not cause any major conflict with the sustainability objectives of the local plan.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

92. It is proposed that there will be 35 spaces on site. Under WBC current parking standards there would need to be 21 parking spaces provided (1 for every 3 residents) for visitors and 1 space for every full-time equivalent member of staff (FTEs).
93. It has been stated within the documents accompanying the application, that the

maximum number of staff on site at any one time would be 33 FTEs, requiring 33 spaces. This would imply the need for 54 parking spaces with the proposed quantum of occupancy combined with employment figures. This development would therefore have a shortfall of 19 spaces.

94. This point was previously conveyed to the applicant at pre-application stage, wherein WBC Highways stated that if there were to be departures to the parking standards, full evidence would need to be submitted to justify this departure.
95. The applicant has followed pre-application advice and has provided evidence based on parking utilisation exercise based on surveyed sites in TRICS, a nationally accepted trip rate database. The provided utilisation exercise shows that there is ample capacity in the car park and at the busiest time (13:00 to 14:00) there are 2 spare spaces based on the total number of 35 spaces. The level of parking proposed results in a parking ratio of 0.55 which WBC Highways view as acceptable.
96. The TRICs sites used in this assessment were based on suitably equivalent care homes in terms of scale and function, which clarify that the proposed level of parking is acceptable and has been successfully applied to development nationwide with similar requirements.
97. Though parking details are to be reserve for future approval, the car parking spaces within the indicative site plan appear to be 5m x 2.5m which complies with the parking standards as established within Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan 2014. In the same respect, the indicative plan shows that there is ample space behind the parking spaces for safe maneuvering for both cars, motorcycles and emergency vehicles.
98. To secure parking control to incentivise against staff and visitors parking outside of the application site, a parking management plan has been secured by condition to be submitted and approved by the local planning authority prior to occupation.

Cycle Parking

99. It is proposed that there will be 14 sheltered and secure cycle storage for staff and 6 covered and secure spaces for visitors. Whilst layout and subsequently the quantum of parking is reserved for later approval, the indicated level of cycle parking is acceptable.
100. To promote sustainable active transport, the indicative floor plans propose that there would a changing area and showers for staff who cycle. Officers would expect this detail to be carried through to reserved matters phase.

Trip Generation

101. The existing site comprises suis-generis commercial use including vehicle storage, vehicle repairs and commercial hire operations.
102. The nationally accredited TRICS database has been used to determine the trips generated by these land uses which is an acceptable methodology as concurred

by WBC Highways. This data has covered both the existing use, and the proposed use utilizing similar examples with their respective amount of trips generated by vehicles accessing site.

103. The TRICS data and submitted trip generation information arrives at the conclusion that the proposed trip generation is less than or similar to the existing uses. Therefore, in particular given the provision of on-site sustainable minibus access, the resulting trip generation would notably decrease which in turn mitigates the frequency of vehicles in and out of site, maintaining the tranquility of this edge of settlement location. This data further confirms that the proposal would not generate additional traffic which may have caused highway safety concern.

Access and Maneuvering

104. Within the 2013 appeal under X0360/A/13/2198994, WBC Highways at that time accepted the access for that development as safe and suitable for a more intense use than is proposed here. The proposed access is in the same location and therefore objection would not be raised in relation to highway safety concerns in this position. The access features adequate visibility splays based on the 85th percentile of speed meaning that motorcars, refuse vehicles and emergency vehicles will be able to safely exit site without impact to highway safety. Swept paths for a refuse vehicle and fire tender using the proposed access have also been submitted, showing safe access and maneuvering.
105. There is also proposed a pedestrian access on to Blagrove Lane with a dropped kerb and tactile paving on the eastern side of the site. The pedestrian access links into internal footways in the site which promotes active permeability.
106. The existing access on Evendons Lane will be stopped up and returned to verge/native hedgerow at the applicant's expense and has been secured by highways and landscape conditions.

Framework Travel Plan

107. A Framework Travel plan has been submitted which includes and references WBC's guidance on workplace travel plans including MyJourney. This Travel Plan includes references to Wokingham and Crowthorne station as attractive destinations for staff to travel to and from. This document includes Interim targets and an action plan that will be refined once the first staff surveys have been undertaken. This will be arranged by a travel plan coordinator which will be funded through the life of the travel plan which is welcome.
108. As agreed, the applicant has provided multiple references to the proposed mini-bus service which will improve the sustainability credentials on site, including their pick up and drop off locations.
109. Officers are content with the submitted framework travel plan as concurred by WBC Highways, which will be secured as an obligation within the S106 legal agreement.

Delivery and Servicing Plan

110. Given the layout of the site is a matter reserved, the applicant at this stage has not submitted an extensive servicing and delivery plan which will inform where deliveries will occur, the time periods associated and storage/ access. A comprehensive delivery and servicing plan has been secured by condition in the interests of highway safety and neighbouring amenity.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking

111. Though all matters are reserved for later approval (bar access) which include the location of windows and specific siting of the building itself, the submitted parameters plan shows adequate separation distances from neighbouring dwellings in accordance with the guidance within the Wokingham Borough Design Guide. The relevant distances are shown below in table 1:

| Separation Distance (Indicated) | Dwelling | Relationship | Separation Distance Requirement (BDG) | Compliance |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|------------|
| c36.3 metres | 1 Blagrove Lane | Front to flank | 15m (back to flank utilised) | Yes |
| c35.1 metres | 3 Blagrove Lane | Front to flank | 15m (back to flank utilised) | Yes |
| c34.7 metres | 5 Blagrove Lane | Front to Flank | 15m (back to flank utilised) | Yes |
| c34 metres | 7 Blagrove Lane | Front to Flank | 15m (back to flank utilised) | Yes |
| c41.1 metres | Viewlands Blagrove Lane | Front to Flank | 15m (back to flank utilised) | Yes |
| c40 metres | Meadow View Blagrove Lane | Front to Flank | 15m (back to flank utilised) | Yes |
| c16 metres | Rosary Cottage | Flank to Flank | 1m (flank to flank utilised) | Yes |

Table 1: Indicative separation distances from neighbouring dwellings.

112. Officers note that upon confirmation of the anticipated layout at reserved matters stage that any overlooking impacts can be more comprehensively assessed, however, given this is an outline, only an indicative assessment can be undertaken. The relationship the proposal would share with the majority of residential properties is front to flank which is not prescribed within the Borough Design Guide. Accordingly, back to flank measurements have been cautiously applied to make the comparative assessment above. In fact, even if back to back measurements were

incorporated, the proposal would still remain in excess of the Borough's own good practice guidance.

113. With reference to table 1 above, the proposal can clearly exceed the minimum separation distances within the Borough Design Guide which would be expected to be followed through at reserved matters stage.

Loss of Light and Overbearing

114. Whilst the proposed building will be larger than the existing buildings to facilitate the proposed number of bedspaces, due to the parameters establishing large separation distances from residential dwellings combined with retained and enhanced screening, the proposal is considered to not have a significant loss of light impact on neighbouring properties.
115. The proposal will be sufficiently screened from the neighbouring properties on all sides bar the modest access area, by retaining and enhancing existing mature vegetation to the extent only glimpsed views of the building will be apparent from the front elevation of dwellings along Blagrove Lane. This, along with considerable separation means the building would not appear overbearing to neighbouring residential amenity.

Noise

116. Paragraph 185 of the NPPF aims to minimise potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development. Similarly, Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity, Policy CC06 and Appendix 1 of the MDD Local Plan requires that development protect noise sensitive receptors from noise impact. Page 46 of the Borough Design Guide SPD states that, "*perceived privacy is determined more by the degree to which one hears one's neighbours than by overlooking*".
117. Objections have been received on potential noise disturbance from the proposed development. The proposed care home would be a noise sensitive receptor in its own right as opposed to being a generating source since the future residents will be frail and elderly with specialist care needs. Though the site does provide external amenity space, use of this space would not give rise to such significant levels of noise as to disturb the quiet enjoyment of neighbouring occupiers. Given the sui-generis use on site, Officers consider the noise level to decrease from that existing.
118. Deliveries, service vehicles and staff movements, with the latter being dictated by shift patterns of carers, would predominantly take place in front of the building in a designated bay during the daytime rather than at unsociable hours which will be facilitated by one vehicle movement of the minibus. To protect neighbouring amenity, a Delivery and Servicing Plan is secured by condition which the LPA can utilize to dictate acceptable and 'social' hours for deliveries.

Odour

119. Cooking on a large scale has a risk of odour nuisance if not appropriately treated and extracted to minimise odours and encourage dispersal. The design of the flue should be based on the odour risk profile of the food being cooked and the proximity to sensitive receptors. This detail is expected at reserved matters stage once layout

and scale are considered.

Lighting

120. Given all matters are reserved bar access for later approval, condition 5 has been applied which required details of these to be shared with the LPA for approval prior to installation. Notwithstanding, given the retention and enhancement of the surrounding vegetation it is unlikely that any notable neighbouring amenity impacts will arise from the proposal when considered at reserved matters stage.

Amenity of Future Residents:

External amenity:

121. The indicative proposal includes a communal garden and surrounding green infrastructure. The level of amenity indicatively proposed is acceptable for the intended use, however, the LPA will expect further details to be provided alongside any future reserved matters application.

Internal amenity:

122. As per the Department of Health's National Minimum Standards, the future reserved matters submission should provide a minimum of 12sq metres usable floor- space (excluding ensuite facilities). Additionally, rooms are required to individually and naturally ventilated with windows conforming to recognised standards.
123. The indicatively submitted plans suggest that all rooms will have acceptable level of internal space and will be served by at least one external window, however, these details are reserved for later approval.

Trees and Landscape:

Arboricultural Information

124. A Tree Survey and Impact Assessment by Keen Consultants and dated May 2023 has been provided to support the application. There is a discussion in the text of the impact assessment regarding the impact of the proposed development on the existing trees. Following request from WBC Trees and Landscape, the Tree Constraints Plan now shows the proposed sketch layout to assess any impacts to trees triggered by the indicative details.
125. The overlay of the indicative layout shows that the inner cluster of stems of tree group 17 is to be removed but those alongside Blagrove Lane can be retained. Whilst the landscaping 'matter' is reserved, a degree of potential tree loss is indicated on the Layout Overlay Plan, however, this is caveated by notable enhancements that both improve the species on site and their management opportunities.
126. All of the trees within group 17 have been identified as being in poor condition with

many in the group having died and failed. To secure long term tree cover, and its contribution to local landscape, in this portion of the site new tree planting can be undertaken to bolster the group. This is secured via condition prior to commencement of development and should be considered once the layout is finalised within any future reserved matters application.

127. To create the access point off Blagrove Lane, a section of hedgerow 22 needs to be removed. In addition, further hedgerow needs to be removed and some needs to be cut back to enable safe visibility splays. Circa 41m of hedge will need to be removed with the remainder trimmed back in keeping with traditional hedgerow management. Most of this hedge line has become dominated by elm that tends to die off as and when it succumbs to Dutch Elm Disease.
128. Continuity of the hedgerow, and its contribution to the character of the has been secured by hedgerow condition. This should include enhancements to the rear of the visibility splays ensuring no material loss of hedge but long term security of the feature, further improving the quality of species in this location. In this respect, whilst the reduction and immediate magnitude of change is noted to be moderate, rather than cause any long term substantial harm to the character of Blagrove Lane, the application proposals provide opportunity to secure the enhanced character in perpetuity.
129. Hedgerow 26 along the western boundary is proposed to be retained and managed accordingly. An absence of management in recent years has resulted in an open and patchy appearance which lowers the quality of the existing hedgerow. In this respect, a future reserved matters application will provide greater detail on management and mitigation measures.
130. Tree group 18 which is a cluster of ash trees, are all showing signs of Ash Dieback, however, at current they offer positive visual amenity value. These are indicated to be retained, which can be successfully factored into the indicative layout.
131. The application proposals also have the ability to secure a long term landscape contribution to Evendons Lane by the bolstering of the vegetation that makes up hedgerow 12 and infilling the existing entrance with a new section of hedgerow. This detail will be considered within future reserved matters application, secured via condition.
132. To secure long term tree protection, native enhancements and management opportunities, conditions 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14 have been agreed by the applicant.

Environmental Health:

Contamination

133. Whilst the Council holds no specific information to indicate that the application site or the area surrounding the site may be contaminated, on a precautionary basis the possibility of contamination should be considered when a potentially sensitive development, such as a care home, is proposed. For this reason, Officers have secured condition 15 for testing, remediation and verification should the application be recommended for approval.

Waste Storage

134. Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan requires adequate internal and external storage for the segregation of waste and recycling as well as provision for green waste and composting and an appropriate area for ease of collection. The waste storage capacity must be adequate for the intended occupation level of the proposed properties and will be expected to feature in any incoming reserved matters application and within the hard landscaping condition (condition 9).

Flooding and Drainage:

Flooding

135. The proposal site is located within Flood Zone 1 and as such redevelopment of the site for C2 Care Home provision is acceptable in principle. The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment which has been reviewed by the WBC Drainage officers and raised no objection to the proposed development subject to conditions securing additional details including exceedance flow, surface water drainage and SUDS management for the 1 in 100- year storm when system is at capacity.

Surface Water

136. Sustainable drainage systems are proposed to manage surface water. A new attenuation basin will be located to the west of Rosery Cottage, in the lowest part of the site. An area of the pond will be permanently wet, and new planting around the edges will create habitats and green infrastructure.
137. The indicated SUDS basin will not be accessible to the care home residents. It is anticipated that it will be maintained by the care home, with access via Doles Lane and the field to the north.
138. Objections have been received from local residents on potential risk of flooding of neighbouring properties arising from the construction of a large building, however, given the site's location within Flood Zone 1 and in area of low surface water flooding risk, this would not substantiate refusal. Furthermore, more details on the proposed drainage system have been secured by condition.

Foul Water

139. Thames Water have advised that there is sufficient sewerage network infrastructure capacity to connect the development, raising no objection to the proposal.

Ecology:

140. Core Strategy Policy CP7, carried forward by MDD LP Policy TB23, requires appropriate protection of species and habitats of conservation value.
141. The application is supported by an Ecological Appraisal (Aspect Ecology, ref: 5904 EcoAp dv6/MC/DM, May 2023) and a separate Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (Aspect Ecology, ref: 5904 BNGA dv2 MC/DM, June 2023). The Biodiversity Net

Gain Assessment is accompanied by the Defra metric 4.0 spreadsheet which is a nationally accredited metric to assess BNG.

Biodiversity Net Gain

142. This is an outline application that has been submitted prior to the commencement of the statutory biodiversity net gain requirement. Considering current local plan policies and the NPPF, there is not a requirement to deliver greater than 10% biodiversity net gain, and considered the development achieved twice this amount it significantly weighs in favour of the proposal.
143. As this is an outline application, it is appropriate to establish what the current site baseline condition is and consider whether a biodiversity net loss is likely to occur using the parameters plan as the post-development scenario and accepting that there may be a degree of deviation from this once full detail of habitats within those parameters is resolved at reserved matters.
144. Considering the updated metric at the request of WBC Ecology, the alterations to the baseline and proposals have led to an overall update to the BNG scores and percentage gains. In summary, the updated Metric indicates that the development will result in a +0.68 (+19.49%) gain in habitat units and a +0.30 (13.65%) gain in hedgerow units. This net gain provided with no statutory requirement weighs significantly within the planning balance.

Protected Species

Great Crested Newts

145. Sufficient survey effort has been undertaken for the local planning authority to be able to consider the impact of the proposed development on Great Crested Newts.
146. The Ecological Appraisal reports that surveys have shown a low population of Great Crested Newts are present on site. The proposal would result in loss of a Great Crested Newt pond, however, this would be mitigated to a standard that is acceptable as concurred by Nature Space.
147. The District Licensing process has been followed by the applicant who has submitted details of the agreed mitigation measures. These have been secured by condition as suggested by NatureSpace. Accordingly, there are no objections in regards to the proposals impact on Great Crested Newts.

Bats

148. Sufficient survey effort has been undertaken for the local planning authority to be able to consider the impact of the proposed development on bats.
149. Two buildings have been identified as supporting bat roosts. The bat roosts are characterised as male or non-breeding female day roosts of common species.

150. Building B1 is proposed to be demolished with the resultant destruction of a Common Pipistrelle and a Brown Long-eared bat roost. A derogation licence will be required from Natural England which is secured by condition 42.
151. Given that bats have been shown to be roosting in a building adjacent to the application site and that there is an enhancement proposal from the applicant's ecologist to provide bat boxes within the development, It is strongly recommended that the British Standard 42020:2013 condition to secure external lighting mitigation measures for light sensitive species is applied to an approval (condition 5). This will secure dark corridor routes for commuting to and from places of rest for bats. This would bring forward the detail of the mitigation measures proposed by the applicant's ecologist in MM7 of the Ecological Appraisal.

Other Protected Species

152. Mitigation measures for other protected species during construction are proposed by the applicant's ecologist – see MM3, MM8, MM9, MM10, and MM13. WBC Ecology concur that these are appropriate but aren't currently detailed sufficiently to condition their direct implementation. The detail of these measures could be resolved and approved through the BS42020:2013 CEMP condition which has been agreed by the applicant.
153. Local plan policy TB23 requires new development to be ecologically permeable. In part MM10 recommended by the applicant's ecologist recognises this and recommends the provision of Hedgehog highway routes, habitat piles, bee bricks and bird boxes. All of which can be secured at reserved matters stage and via an appended ecological permeability condition.

Infrastructure:

CIL:

154. The proposal is for additional floor area of Use Class C2. It is recommended that the applicant liaise with the CIL team prior to submission of any reserved matters application.

Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area

155. Policy CP8 of the Core Strategy Development which alone or in combination is likely to have a significant effect on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures to avoid and mitigate any potential adverse effects are delivered.
156. The subtext to policy CP8 outlines that:

The Appropriate Assessment indicates that to ensure that development avoids its likely significant impact upon the SPA, the following principles will apply:

- i) Dwellinghouses and other residential development (including staff accommodation in use class C2) will need to provide avoidance and mitigation measures where:*

The proposal involves the provision of one or more net additional residential unit and is within 5km (linear) of the SPA. Contributions to on site SPA access management measures and monitoring in line with the Delivery Framework will be required together with provision of SANG at a minimum of 8ha/1,000 population (calculated at a rate of 2.4 persons per household). This monitoring includes the effectiveness of the SANG;

157. The application site is located within the 7km linear buffer zone of the Thames Basin Heath SPA however the proposal is for use class C2 equating to 35.5 dwellings which is below the policy threshold to require monetary compensation for any impact to the SPA.

Built Heritage

158. Circa 70 metres north of the application site lays 'Hutts Farm', a collection of 3 Grade II listed farmhouses from the 16th and 17th centuries.
159. Paragraph 205 of the NPPF outlines that the preservation of designated heritage assets should be afforded significant weight on balance, stating *"When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance"*.
160. Following initial consultation, WBC Built Heritage requested additional information to greater assess the potential impacts to the adjoining heritage assets. The additional information from a heritage stance bolstered WBC Built Heritage views that the proposed development is most unlikely to have any adverse impact to the setting of those designated heritage asset closest to the site 'Hutts Farm' which is notably separated from the site.
161. The application site also lays adjacent to 'Rosery Cottage' which is a non-designated heritage asset.
162. Paragraph 209 of the NPPF acknowledges the importance in preserving non-designated heritage assets. This states *"The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."*
163. With respect to the non-designated heritage asset of Rosery Cottage, the close proximity of the care-home development (circa 16 metres flank to flank) does have the potential to negatively impact its setting to a moderate degree. Notwithstanding, WBC Built Heritage raise no objection in principle subject to further details on design/height of the proposed buildings to be clarified at reserved matters stage.

Archaeology:

164. The full archaeological potential of the area has yet to be investigated as little development has occurred in the area, however despite this, the wider landscape shows an the area has had nearby activity over many periods, with substantial Iron Age activity to the north c.850m, where industrial furnaces were discovered at FollyCourt, to the south-west c.1.1km at Rooks Nest Farm there is evidence of an Iron Age or Roman settlement, whilst Barkham has an Early Medieval/Medieval origin, mentioned in the Domesday Book in AD952.
165. To account for the site's archaeological potential, condition 38 has been agreed by the applicant to secure a trial dig and subsequent written scheme of investigation.

Employment Skills Plan:

166. Policy TB12 of the Wokingham Borough Council MDD, requires planning applications for all major development (both commercial and residential) in Wokingham Borough to submit an employment skills plan (ESP) with a supporting method statement.
167. ESPs are worked out using the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) benchmarks which are based on the value of construction. Planning applicants will need to submit an estimated construction value for the development or this value can be calculated using the proposed floor space in the planning application and applying BCIS industry standard build costs (£1025 m²).
168. The number of employment and training outcomes for the site specific ESP will be derived by applying the value of construction for the development to the benchmarks set out in the attached guidance. Organisations are required to provide a Method Statement setting out how they would intend to deliver the ESP.
169. Though given all matters bar access are reserved for later approval, the applicant has agreed to engage into a S106 legal obligation to secure an ESP, or contribution in lieu, of which specific figure will be calculated once a construction value can be derived from the gross proposed floorspace (a matter reserved for latter approval).
170. The applicants/owners bound by the planning obligation will be available to communicate progress on the ESP with the Economic Prosperity and Place Team of the Council at any time but will be required to provide regular status reports on the progress on delivering the ESP at pre-agreed intervals.
171. Primarily, before start on site and 50%, and 75% of construction of the development. If the applicants/owners bound by the planning obligation elects to deliver the ESP rather than pay the ES Contribution in lieu, the applicants/owners bound by the planning obligation will be required to notify the Council in writing of the trigger points set out in the previous sentence and deliver the ESP in accordance with the KPIs. This will include an update of the ESP demonstrating the achievements and providing evidence against each of the agreed employment and skills areas and KPIs.

Planning Balance:

172. The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable

housing sites. Consequently, the tilted balance, as advocated by paragraph 11d of the NPPF is engaged and planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the NPPF taken as a whole. The equivalent contribution of 35.5 dwellings (alongside meeting the accommodation needs of vulnerable groups) is afforded significant weight in the overall balance.

173. The proposal will replace an existing poor quality suis-generis commercial complex with a larger building of specialist care home within designated countryside that will be contrary to the criterion within policy CP11, however this would not result in significant visual or spatial character harm given the brownfield nature of the majority of the site. In fact, it can be argued that the new compact character arising from the proposal is a visual benefit to the quality of the environment. The partial conflict with CP11 of the development plan relating to the proposal's location in designated countryside will attract less weight in the current circumstances where a 5-year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated as per paragraph 11d of the NPPF.
174. In favour of the proposal, it will deliver 64 high-quality specialist care home bedspaces that will attract positive weight since inspectors have identified an unmet need for such provisions within the Borough. The proposal complies with development plan policies CP2 and TB09 which aim to provide choices of accommodation for vulnerable groups including older people. The proposal is also broadly consistent with the intents of the NPPF in terms of provision of specialist care home and not introducing an isolated home in the countryside given the site's proximity to a major development location. In this regard the development can be viewed as performing a overwhelmingly positive social role.
175. Given the site's location outside of settlement limits and with due regards to appeal decisions precedent, the development would be moderately accessible and the integration of sustainable transport methods further bolster the site's sustainability credentials, compliant with development plan policy CP1 and CP6. Noting the on-site improvements planned, when combined with the pedestrian crossing and infrastructure improvements this is tempered. For these reasons, the site's unsustainable location attracts moderate weight in the planning balance. Furthermore, through comprehensive landscape conditions and provision of biodiversity net gain, the development can deliver ecological enhancements to its immediate setting along with an inherent degree of improved sustainability in excess of the most up to date mandatory energy efficiency standards via BREEAM 'Very Good' rating which is secured by condition. Therefore, the development is viewed as performing a positive environmental role.
176. In terms of economic benefits, the development would bring advantages and opportunities in respect of a net full-time job creation (from 12 FTE as existing to 50 FTE) as well as short term opportunities for construction jobs/ material expenditure. Further, given the care home is of private nature, it will generate business rates which are directly payable to the Council alongside employment opportunities for local people offered via an Employment Skills Plan or contribution in lieu. Therefore, the development is viewed as performing a positive economic role.
177. When combining the matters in favour of the proposal above, and in applying significant weight to the provision of specialist housing for older people in this instance where the Council cannot demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing, it is

considered that the limited adverse impacts of the proposal would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh these benefits. On this basis subject to the conditions listed below and the completion of a suitable Section 106 agreement the application is recommended for approval.

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| The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) |
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| <i>In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts upon protected groups as a result of the development.</i> |
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APPENDIX 1 – Conditions and Informatives

CONDITIONS:

1. **Approved details**

This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings named and numbered: 232023-SL01 Location Plan – Revision B, 230323 Design and Access Statement Revision E and 230323-SL03 Parameter Plan - Land Use - Revision D received by the Local Planning Authority on 05/06/2023 and 21/12/2023.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

2. **Reserved Matters**

- a) Approval of the details of the layout, scale, design and external appearance of the building(s) and the landscaping treatment of the site (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority in writing before any development is commenced.
- b) Application for approval of the reserved matters referred to in a) above shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- c) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In pursuance of s91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1991 (as amended by s51 of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004).

3. **Materials**

Before the development hereby permitted is commenced, samples and details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the buildings shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure a high quality development in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP3, Borough Design Guide, CC04 and CC05 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (Feb 2014)

4. **Ground and building levels**

No development shall take place until a measured survey of the site and a plan prepared to scale of not less than 1:500 showing details of existing and proposed finished ground levels (in relation to a fixed datum point) and finished roof levels shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, and the approved scheme shall be fully implemented prior to the occupation of the building(s).

Reason: In order to ensure a satisfactory form of development relative to surrounding buildings and landscape. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB21.

5. **Lighting**

No floodlighting or other form of external lighting scheme shall be installed unless it is in accordance with details which have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include location, height, type and direction of light sources and intensity of illumination for all external lighting strategies including details of lighting for all principle highways, cycleways, footpaths, public areas, any non-residential buildings and must make provision for any protected species on site. Any lighting, which is so installed, shall not thereafter be altered without the prior consent in writing of the Local Planning Authority other than for routine maintenance that does not change its details.

Reason: To prevent an adverse impact upon wildlife and safeguard amenity and highway safety in accordance with NPPF and Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policy CP1, CP3, CP6 and CP7.

6. **Construction Management**

Before the development hereby permitted is commenced a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) in respect of that phase shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Construction shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with each approved CEMP. The CEMP shall include the following matters:

- i) a construction travel protocol or Green Travel plan for the construction phase including details of parking and turning for vehicles of site personnel, operatives and visitors;
- ii) loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- iii) storage of plant and materials;
- iv) programme of works / phasing / lorry routing and potential numbers (including measures for traffic management and operating hours);
- v) piling techniques including types of piling rig and earth moving machinery;
- vi) provision of boundary hoarding;
- vii) protection of the aquatic environment in terms of water quantity and quality;
- viii) details of proposed means of dust suppression and noise mitigation;
- ix) details of measures to prevent mud from vehicles leaving the site during construction;
- x) details of any site construction office, compound and ancillary facility buildings. These facilities shall be sited away from woodland areas;
- xi) lighting on site during construction (including temporary);
- xii) measures to ensure no on site fires during construction
- xiii) monitoring and review mechanisms;
- xiv) implementation of the CEMP through an environmental management system;
- xv) details of the haul routes to be used to access the development;
- xvi) details of the temporary surface water management measures to be provided during the construction phase;
- xvii) details of the excavation of materials and the subsurface construction methodology
- xviii) appointment of a Construction Liaison Officer. Any deviation from this Statement shall be first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.
- xxiv) The timing of the works
- xxv) The measures to be used during the development in order to minimise environmental impact of the works (considering both potential disturbance and pollution)
- xxvi) The ecological enhancements as mitigation for the loss of habitat resulting from the development.
- xxvii) A map or plan showing habitat areas to be specifically protected (identified in the ecological report) during the works.
- xxviii) Any necessary mitigation for protected or notable species.

Reason: To protect occupants of nearby dwellings and protected species from noise and disturbance during the construction period, in the interest of highway safety and convenience and to minimize the environmental impact of the construction phase in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3, CP6 and CP7 and TB23 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy.

7. **Construction Times**

No work relating to the development hereby approved, including preparation prior to building operations, shall take place other than between the hours of 08:00 am and

6pm Monday to Friday and 08:00 am to 1 pm Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank or National Holidays.

Reason: To protect the occupiers of neighbouring properties from noise and disturbance outside the permitted hours during the construction period. Relevant Policies: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.

Design Compliance

8. The application for Reserved Matters approval shall be accompanied by a Design Statement which shall explain how the proposals conform to the requirements of the approved Design and Access Statement (230323 Design and Access Statement Revision E) and parameters plan (230323-SL03 Parameter Plan - Land Use - Revision D).

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity. Relevant Policy: NPPF, Core Strategy CP1 and CP3.

9. **Landscape details (Large scale)**

Prior to the commencement of the development, full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals for that sub phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include, as appropriate, proposed finished floor levels or contours, means of enclosure, car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas, hard surfacing materials and minor artefacts and structure (e.g. furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting, external services, etc). Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable.

All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the relevant sub phase development or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of species, size and number as originally approved and permanently retained.

Reason: To ensure adequate planting in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21 (and TB06 for garden development). Retention of existing trees/shrubs/hedges.

10. **Trees and Landscape Retention**

No trees, shrubs or hedges within the site which are shown as being retained on the approved plans shall be felled, uprooted wilfully damaged or destroyed, cut back in any way or removed without previous written consent of the local planning authority; any trees, shrubs or hedges removed without consent or dying or being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within 5 years from the completion of the development hereby permitted shall be replaced with trees, shrubs or hedge plants of similar size and species unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that development is being carried out, of trees, shrubs and hedges growing within the site which are of amenity value to the area in accordance with Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

11. Protection of existing trees

- a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until an Arboricultural Method Statement and Scheme of Works which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority (the Approved Scheme); the tree protection measures approved shall be implemented in complete accordance with the Approved Scheme for the duration of the development (including, unless otherwise provided by the Approved Scheme) demolition, all site preparation work, tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery.
- b) No development (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) shall commence until the local planning authority has been provided (by way of a written notice) with a period of no less than 7 working days to inspect the implementation of the measures identified in the Approved Scheme on-site.
- c) No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the Approved Scheme.
- d) The fencing or other works which are part of the Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval of the local planning authority has first been sought and obtained.

Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that development is being carried out, of trees, shrubs and hedges growing within the site which are of amenity value to the area in accordance with Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

12. Landscape Management Plan

Prior to the commencement of the development a landscape management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities, timescales and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved.

Reason: In order to ensure that provision is made to allow satisfactory maintenance of the landscaping hereby approved. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

13. Earth mounding and contouring

Prior to the commencement of the development, details of earthworks required to facilitate the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include the proposed grading and mounding of land areas including the levels and contours to be formed, showing the relationship of proposed mounding to existing vegetation and surrounding landform. The Earthworks

shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and permanently so-retained.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity and landscape character of the area in accordance with Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

14. Hedgerows

The reserved matters of the development shall include a detailed hedgerow mitigation and compensation strategy. This shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority at reserved matters stage.

The detailed hedgerow mitigation and compensation strategy shall include:

(a) Details of buffer zones required to be protected the retained hedgerows, such buffer zones to be a minimum of 10m unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

(b) The buffer zones required to protect the retained hedgerows should be free from any development.

(c) A detailed method statement for the translocation of any hedgerows to be removed as a result of the development, unless mitigation could be better achieved in ecological terms through new hedgerow creation.

(d) A detailed hedgerow compensation strategy to address all other significant negative impacts on the local hedgerow network as a result of the development.

(e) Management arrangements for the receptor site that will secure the long term future of the translocated habitats and species. The mitigation and compensation strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plan unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure appropriate mitigation of the impact upon hedgerows during construction and in the long term in accordance with NPPF, Core Strategy Policy CP1, CP3 and CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

15. Contamination

Prior to commencement, a scheme to deal with potential contamination of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include an investigation and assessment to identify the extent of any contamination and the measures to be taken to avoid risk when the site is developed. No building shall be occupied until the approved measures have been carried out and a validation report has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: to ensure that any contamination of the site is remedied and to protect existing and future occupants of the application site and adjacent land in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policy CP1 and CP3.

16. In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. Any subsequent investigation/remedial/protective works deemed necessary by the LPA shall be carried out to agreed timescales and approved by the LPA in writing. If no contamination is encountered during the development, a letter confirming this fact shall be submitted to the LPA upon completion of the development.

Reason: To ensure any contamination on the site is remedied to protect the existing / proposed occupants of the application site and adjacent land in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policy CP1 and CP3.

17. Cycle Parking

The reserved matters shall include details of covered cycle parking to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No building shall be occupied until the cycle parking has been implemented / installed. The cycle parking shall be permanently retained and delivered in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: In order to ensure the development contributes towards achieving a sustainable transport system and to provide parking for cycles in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP6, the Parking Standards Study within the Borough Design Guide 2010 and CC07 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (Feb 2014).

18. Details of car and motorcycle parking

The reserved matters to comply with Condition 3 shall include details of car and motorcycle parking in accordance with the Council's policies and which are to be approved in writing by the Council. No building shall be occupied until the vehicular accesses, parking and turning areas to serve it including any unallocated spaces have been provided in accordance with the approved details and the provision shall be retained thereafter. The vehicle parking shall not be used for any other purposes other than parking and the turning spaces shall not be used for any other purposes than turning.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP6, CC07 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (Feb 2014) and the Borough Design Guide 2010.

19. Parking Management Strategy

Prior to the first occupation of the building, a Parking Management Strategy for the management of on-street parking shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: to ensure satisfactory development in the interests of amenity and highway safety in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3 and CP6.

20. Vehicle turning

Prior to the commencement of the development, details of vehicle turning and manoeuvring space(s) within the site (allowing vehicles to turn so that they may enter and leave the site in a forward gear) for the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall not be occupied until the turning and manoeuvring space(s) has been provided in full accordance with the approved details. The turning and manoeuvring space(s) shall thereafter be so-retained and shall be used for no other purpose.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory form of development and to avoid adverse impact on the public highway in the interests of highway safety. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

21. Construction access

Details of any construction access(es) to be provided shall be submitted to, and approved by the Local Planning Authority, prior to commencement of development.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP6.

22. Access

Prior to commencement of the development, details of the proposed vehicular accesses on to Blagrove Lane to include visibility splays of 2.4m by 43m shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The accesses shall be formed as so approved, and the visibility splays shall be cleared of any obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height prior to the occupation of the development. The accesses shall be retained in accordance with the approved details and used for no other purpose and the land within the visibility splays shall be maintained clear of any visual obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience in accordance with Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

23. Stopping up Access

The existing vehicular access to the site on Evendons Road shall be stopped up and abandoned, and the footway and/or verge crossings shall be re-instated within one month of the completion of the new access on Blagrove Lane in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

24. Delivery Servicing Plan

Prior to occupation a Delivery and Servicing Plan be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6

25. Travel Plan

Prior to the commencement of the development a Travel Plan shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for their approval in writing. The Travel Plan shall be based on the principles set out in the Framework Travel Plan reference C21060/TP01 dated October 2022 and shall include modal targets to achieve its objectives and a timetable for their achievement. The Travel Plan shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To encourage the use of all travel modes. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 9 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policy CP6.

26. Walking and Cycling Strategy

Prior to the commencement of development, details of pedestrian and cycle connections from the development to Wokingham Station and the nearest bus stops on Evendons Lane, are to be submitted for approval by the local planning authority. This detail must assess the site context (including any on-site infrastructure improvements proposed) and outline desire lines to and from sustainable transport methods from the site for pedestrian and cycle access.

Reason: In the interests of sustainable travel, convenience and highway safety in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP6.

27. LEMP

No development shall take place until a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The LEMP shall include:

- a) Description and evaluation of features to be managed.

- b) Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management.
- c) Aims and objectives of management.
- d) Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.
- e) Prescriptions for management actions.
- f) Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period).
- g) Details of the body or organization responsible for implementation of the plan.
- h) Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.

The LEMP shall also include details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer with the management body(ies) responsible for its delivery. The plan shall also set out (where the results from monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the LEMP are not being met) how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme. The LEMP shall also include long term design objectives, management responsibilities, timescales and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas, other than privately owned, domestic gardens. The approved plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the first occupation of the building and permanently maintained thereafter.

Reason: To secure the maintenance of the Biodiversity Net Gain on-site provision for a minimum period of 30 years. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment).

28. **Ecological Permeability**

Prior to any works commencing, a detailed strategy for provision of ecological permeability and species enhancements shall be submitted to the local authority for its approval. This strategy shall be prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist and appropriate to the local ecological context. Once approved the strategy shall be implemented in full unless otherwise agreed by the local authority in writing.

Reason: To ensure that the proposal is in accordance with Section 41 NERC Act re. UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species (Species of Principal Importance) and complies with Planning Policies for Wildlife including CP7 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) and TB23 of the MDD (2014), and the National Planning Policy Framework which requires consideration of the potential biodiversity gains that can be secured within developments.

29. **Details of boundary walls and fences**

Before the development hereby permitted is commenced details of all boundary treatment(s) shall first be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development or phased as agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be maintained in the approved form for so long as the development remains on the site.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and highway safety. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6.

30. **Noise Impact Assessment**

Prior to commencement of development, an in-depth noise impact assessment should be carried out by an appropriately qualified consultant, this should be submitted to the local authority for approval. This can inform the design to achieve best practice and will need to address noise impact in terms of:

- Existing noise sources and how they may affect the amenity of the occupiers of the site once construction is complete, this is to take into consideration the character of the site and the nearby roads etc, and the impact on the amenity of nearby noise sensitive receptors as a result of the new development, both internal and external spaces, taking into consideration any mechanical noise arising from the use of the proposed development including, but not limited to, kitchen extractor fans.
- The impact on nearby noise sensitive receptors during the construction phase, to include vehicle movement and plant and machinery being used, as well as construction noise and any mitigation measures.
- Details of good design to protect occupiers of the proposed development from noise from existing noise sources, glazing and ventilation of the proposed properties will need to be designed to meet acceptable internal and external noise levels.

This report should identify a clear scheme of recommended works, or such other steps as may be necessary to minimize the effects of noise on nearby receptors and on future occupants of the development. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the development and permanently retained thereafter.

Reason: To protect the occupants of nearby residential properties and future occupiers of the proposed development from noise. Relevant policies: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

31. **Odour Extraction details**

Before any development hereby permitted commences the details of fume

extraction, mechanical ventilation and filtration equipment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The equipment shall be installed prior to the first occupation of the building in accordance with the approved details and thereafter be retained, operated and maintained in its approved form and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations for so long as the use hereby permitted remains on site.

Reason: To ensure that no nuisance or disturbance is caused to the occupiers of neighbouring properties. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.

32. **Drainage**

A Surface Water Drainage Strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing prior to occupation of the building hereby approved. The Drainage strategy shall include:

1. Calculations indicating the Greenfield runoff rate from the site.
2. BRE 365 test results demonstrating whether infiltration is achievable or not.
3. Use of SuDS following the SuDS hierarchy, preferably infiltration.
4. Full calculations demonstrating the performance of soakaways or capacity of attenuation features to cater for 1 in 100 year flood event with a 40% allowance for climate change and runoff controlled at Greenfield rates, or preferably better.
5. Calculations demonstrating that there will be no flooding of pipes for events up to and including the 1 in 100 year flood event with a 40% allowance for climate change.
6. If connection to an existing surface water sewer is proposed, we need to understand why other methods of the SuDS hierarchy cannot be implemented and see confirmation from the utilities supplier that their system has sufficient capacity and the connection is acceptable.
7. Separate drainage systems for any proposed adopted highways and the care home.

Reason: This is to prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off. Relevant policy: NPPF (2019) Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.

33. **Maintenance and Exceedance Routing flow**

No development shall be put in to use/occupied until a SuDS management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public authority or statutory undertaker and any other arrangements to secure the operation of the scheme throughout its lifetime, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall not take place until an exceedance flow routing plan for flows above the 1 in 100+40% event has been submitted to and approved in writing by

the Local Planning Authority. The proposed scheme shall identify exceedance flow routes through the development based on proposed topography with flows being directed to highways and areas of public open space. Flow routes through gardens and other areas in private ownership will not be permitted. The scheme shall subsequently be completed in accordance with the approved details before the development is first brought into use/occupied.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory drainage of the site and avoid flooding. It is important that these details are agreed prior to the commencement of development as any works on site could have implications for drainage in the locality.

34. **Use**

The development hereby permitted shall be used only as a care home (which must include dementia care) falling within the C2 use class and for no other purpose without the express approval of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the provision of specialist care facilities in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CP1, CP2 and CP3 of which was afforded appropriate weight in the planning balance to justify the development outside of settlement limits.

35. **BREEAM Compliance**

The building shall achieve a BREEAM Very Good including demonstrating the following in relation to Assessment Issues Hea 02 and Ene 01 respectively.

i) The BREEAM Assessment will demonstrate that the ventilation strategy provides adequate cross flow of air to maintain the required thermal comfort conditions and ventilation rates in accordance with CIBSE AM10(46) per Assessment Criteria 2.e of Issue Hea 02: Natural ventilation (p.92 of BREEAM UK New Construction Manual 2018).

ii) The BREEAM Assessment shall demonstrate an Energy Performance Ratio (EPRNC) of 0.4 or above is achieved in accordance with the methodology set out for Issue Ene 01 in BREEAM Guidance Note 39. The development shall not be occupied until a final Certificate has been issued for it by an appropriate authority.

The development shall not be occupied until a final Certificate has been issued for it by an appropriate authority.

Reason: To ensure developments contribute to sustainable development. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC04.

36. **Bin Store**

No building shall be occupied until details of bin storage area/ facilities have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The bin

storage area and facilities shall be permanently so-retained and used for no purpose other than the temporary storage of refuse and recyclable materials.

Reason: In the interests of visual and neighbouring amenities and functional development. Relevant policy: Core Strategy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC04.

37. **Communications Plan**

No development shall take place until a Communications Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Communications Plan shall specify methods of communication between local residents and the developer and/or contractors, including the creation of a liaison group to meet in accordance with an agreed schedule during construction. The Plan shall be carried out as approved until the final completion of the development.

Reason: In the interests of neighbouring amenity and highway safety. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment), Core Strategy policies CP1, and CP3.

38. **Archaeology**

- A) No development shall take place/commence until a programme of archaeological work including a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been submitted to, and approved by, the local planning authority in writing. The WSI shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:
1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording
 2. The programme for post investigation assessment
 3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording
 4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation
 5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation
 6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the WSI.
- B) The Development shall take place in accordance with the WSI approved under condition (A). The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI approved under condition (A) and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.

Reason: The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, particularly for, but not limited to, Medieval remains. The potential impacts of the development can be mitigated through a programme of archaeological work. This is in accordance with national and local plan policy.

39. District License Compliance

No development hereby permitted shall take place except in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Council's Organisational Licence (WML-OR137, or a 'Further Licence') and with the proposals detailed on plan "171 Evendons Lane: Impact Plan for great crested newt District Licensing (Version 1)", dated 18th January 2024.

Reason: In order to ensure that adverse impacts on great crested newts are adequately mitigated and to ensure that site works are delivered in full compliance with the Organisational Licence (WML-OR137, or a 'Further Licence'), section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Circular 06/2005 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

40. GCN Delivery Partner

No development hereby permitted shall take place unless and until a certificate from the Delivery Partner (as set out in the District Licence WML-OR137, or a 'Further Licence'), confirming that all necessary measures regarding great crested newt compensation have been appropriately dealt with, has been submitted to and approved by the planning authority and the authority has provided authorisation for the development to proceed under the district newt licence.

The delivery partner certificate must be submitted to this planning authority for approval prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved.

Reason: In order to adequately compensate for negative impacts to great crested newts, and in line with section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Circular 06/2005 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

41. GCN Mitigation

No development hereby permitted shall take place except in accordance with Part 1 of the Great Crested Newt Mitigation Principles, as set out in the District Licence WML-OR137 (or a 'Further Licence') and in addition in compliance with the following:

- Works to existing ponds onsite may only be undertaken during autumn/winter, unless otherwise in accordance with the Great Crested Newt Mitigation Principles.
- Works which will affect likely newt hibernacula may only be undertaken during the active period for amphibians.
- Capture methods must be used at suitable habitat features prior to the commencement of the development (i.e., hand/destructive/night searches), which may include the use of temporary amphibian fencing, to prevent newts moving onto a development site from adjacent suitable habitat, installed for the period of the development (and removed upon completion of the development).
- Amphibian fencing and pitfall trapping must be undertaken at suitable habitats and features, prior to commencement of the development.

Reason: In order to ensure that adverse impacts on great crested newts are adequately mitigated and to ensure that site works are delivered in full compliance with the Organisational Licence (WML-OR137, or a 'Further Licence'), section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Circular 06/2005 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

42. Bat License

Demolition works shall not commence until a licence for development works affecting bats has been obtained from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (Natural England) and a copy (or an email from Natural England that the site has been registered under the bat mitigation class licence) has been submitted to the local planning authority. Thereafter mitigation measures approved in the licence shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details. Should conditions at the site for bats change and / or the applicant conclude that a licence for development works affecting bats is not required the applicant is to submit a report to the council detailing the reasons for this assessment and this report is to be approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to commencement of works.

Reason: To ensure that bats, a material consideration, are not adversely affected by the development. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment), Core Strategy policy CP7 and MDD Local Plan policy TB23.

INFORMATIVES:

1. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received. This planning application has been the subject of positive and proactive discussions with the applicant in terms of: addressing the evolving planning policy context; planning issues relating to design, character and materials addressing concerns relating to highway safety; extending the determination period of the application to allow for a multiple consultations concerning plan revisions. The decision to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF is considered to be a positive outcome of these discussions.
2. The development hereby permitted is liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Liability Notice issued by Wokingham Borough Council will state the current chargeable amount. A revised Liability Notice will be issued if this amount changes. Anyone can formally assume liability to pay, but if no one does so then liability will rest with the landowner. There are certain legal requirements that must be complied with. For instance, whoever will pay the levy must submit an Assumption of Liability form and a Commencement Notice to Wokingham Borough Council prior to commencement of development, failure to do this will result in penalty surcharges being added. For more information see the Council's website - Community Infrastructure Levy advice page. Please submit all CIL forms and enquiries to developer.contributions@wokingham.gov.uk.
3. Whilst it would appear from the application that the proposed development is to be entirely within the curtilage of the application site, the granting of planning permission does not authorise you to gain access or carry out any works on, over or under your neighbour's land or property without first obtaining their consent, and does not obviate the need for compliance with the requirements of the Party Wall etc. Act 1996.
4. The applicant is reminded that this approval is granted subject to conditions which must be complied with prior to the development starting on site. Commencement of the development without complying with the pre-commencement requirements may be outside the terms of this permission and liable to enforcement action. The

information required should be formally submitted to the Council for consideration with the relevant fee. Once the details have been approved in writing the development should be carried out only in accordance with those details. If this is not clear please contact the case officer Benjamin Hindle to discuss.

5. Adequate precautions shall be taken during the construction period to prevent the deposit of mud and similar debris on adjacent highways. For further information contact the Highway Authority on tel.: 0118 9746000.
6. Any works/ events carried out by or on behalf of the developer affecting either a public highway or a prospectively maintainable highway (as defined under s.87 New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA)), shall be co-ordinated and licensed as required under NRSWA and the Traffic Management Act 2004 in order to minimise disruption to both pedestrian and vehicular users of the highway. Any such works or events, and particularly those involving the connection of any utility to the site must be co-ordinated by the developer in liaison with the Borough's Street Works team (0118 974 6302). This must take place AT LEAST three months in advance of the intended works to ensure effective co-ordination with other works so as to minimise disruption.
7. Records indicate a public sewer beneath or in close proximity to the proposed development. In order to protect public sewers and to ensure that Thames Water can gain access to those sewers for future repair and maintenance, approval must be sought from Thames Water where the erection of a building or an extension to a building or underpinning work would be over the line of, or would come within 3 metres of, a public sewer. Thames Water will usually refuse such approval in respect of the construction of new buildings, but approval may be granted in some cases for extensions to existing buildings. The applicant is advised to contact Thames Water Developer Services on 0845 850 2777 to discuss the options available at this site.
8. It is recommended that the NatureSpace Best Practice Principles are considered and implemented where possible and appropriate.
9. It is recommended that the NatureSpace certificate is submitted to this planning authority at least 6 months prior to the intended commencement of any works on site.
10. It is essential to note that any works or activities whatsoever undertaken on site (including ground investigations, site preparatory works or ground clearance) prior to receipt of the written authorisation from the planning authority (which permits the development to proceed under the District Licence WML-OR137, or a 'Further Licence') are not licensed under the great crested newt District Licence. Any such works or activities have no legal protection under the great crested newt District Licence and if offences against great crested newts are thereby committed then criminal investigation and prosecution by the police may follow.
11. It is essential to note that any ground investigations, site preparatory works and ground / vegetation clearance works / activities (where not constituting development under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) in a red zone site authorised under the District Licence but which fail to respect controls equivalent to those detailed in the planning condition above which refers to the NatureSpace

great crested newt mitigation principles would give rise to separate criminal liability under the District Licence, requiring authorised developers to comply with the District Licence and (in certain cases) with the GCN Mitigation Principles (for which Natural England is the enforcing authority); and may also give rise to criminal liability under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and/or the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (for which the Police would be the enforcing authority).

APPENDIX 2 – Wokingham Town Council Comments

PLANNING REF : 231351
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Town Hall Market Place
 : Wokingham
 : RG40 1AS
SUBMITTED BY : The Wokingham Town Council P&T Committee
DATE SUBMITTED : 07/07/2023

COMMENTS:

Although the Committee acknowledge the requirement for dementia care and affordable care homes in Wokingham this was not seen as the appropriate location and development.

The Committee object as follows.

CP4 - Infrastructure requirements

The local Bus service is inadequate for both patients and staff.

CP6 - Manage Travel Demand

CP11 - Proposals outside Development Limits (Including countryside)

This development is in a countryside area and was not included as a potential development site on the Local Plan.

PLANNING REF : 231351
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Town Hall Market Place
 : Wokingham
 : RG40 1AS
SUBMITTED BY : The Wokingham Town Council P&T Committee
DATE SUBMITTED : 06/09/2023

COMMENTS:

The previous objections remain.

There is concern that the minibus service will use Section 106 funding.

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