ITEM NO: 82.00

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development Management Ref No</th>
<th>Parish Ward Listed by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F/2014/1250</td>
<td>Scheme of Delegation</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Applicant**
The Governors – Forest School (C/o Jonathan Holland Architects)

**Location**
The Forest School
Robin Hood Lane
Winnersh
Wokingham
Berkshire

**Proposal**
Proposed erection of new sixth form learning centre, provision of additional car parking and improvements to existing rear access.

**Type** Full
**PS Category** 12
**Officer** Ashley Smith

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Planning Committee on 10/12/14
REPORT PREPARED BY Head of Development Management and Regulatory Services

**SUMMARY**

The proposal consists of the erection of a two storey building at the Forest School which is a state funded secondary school. The proposal will facilitate an increase in pupil numbers of around 190 sixth form pupils, and will also provide enhanced facilities for the existing pupils.

It is considered that the proposals would not be harmful to the street scene or character of the area and that an enhanced school use is appropriate for this in-settlement location. The proposal does not significantly impact on neighbouring properties in terms of overbearing, overlooking or loss of light, or from the additional activity that the enhanced school use might bring. The Highway Authority is satisfied that the development can be mitigated for through the use of an effective Travel Plan (secured by condition), additional parking and by the sustainability of the site.

The proposal therefore accords with the policies contained within the Development Plan and national planning policy as such this application is recommended for approval.

The application is brought before the Committee as it is a development recommended for approval at a school site owned by Wokingham Borough Council which would result in the creation of over 100 m² of additional floor space and additional pupils attending the school.
PLANNING STATUS

- Major Development Settlement
- Sand and gravel extraction area

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

   Reason: In pursuance of Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. 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 and all hardstandings, shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

   Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory.
   Relevant Policy: Core Strategy Policy CP3

3. This permission is in respect of plan no's PL01 Rev G PL02 Rev A, PL03 Rev A, LOC1 received on 01/12/14. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

   Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

4. Prior to the commencement of the development a Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The travel plan shall include a programme of implementation and proposals to promote alternative forms of transport to and from the site, other than by the private car and provide for periodic review. The travel plan shall be fully implemented, maintained and reviewed as so-approved.

   Reason: To encourage the use of all travel modes.
   Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policy CP6.

5. No work relating to the development hereby approved, including works of demolition or preparation prior to building operations, shall take place other than between the hours of 8.00am and 6pm Monday to Friday and 8.30am and 1pm Saturday, 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
6. No development shall take place, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide for:

i) the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors,
ii) loading and unloading of plant and materials,
iii) storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development,
iv) measures to prevent the deposit of materials on the highway and wheel cleaning measures/ facilities,
v) measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction,
vi) measures to inform local residents of the commencement of development by letter and provide appropriate contact details for residents to contact the developer if they have concerns or issues.

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

7. No part of any building hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until the vehicle parking space has been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The vehicle parking space shall be permanently maintained and remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.

Reasons: To ensure adequate on-site parking provision in the interests of highway safety, convenience and amenity.
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

8. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted details of secure and covered bicycle storage/ parking facilities for the occupants of [and visitors to] the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The cycle storage/ parking shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved before occupation of the development hereby permitted, and shall be permanently retained in the approved form for the parking of bicycles and used for no other purpose.

Reason: In order to ensure that secure weather-proof bicycle parking facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel.
Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

9. Development shall not commence until a surface water drainage strategy detailing any on and/or off site drainage works, incorporating Sustainable Urban Drainage principles, has been submitted to and approved by, the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the sewerage undertaker. No discharge of surface water from the site shall be accepted into the public system until the drainage works referred to in the strategy have been completed.

Reason: The development may lead to surface water flooding; to ensure that sufficient capacity is made available to cope with the new development; and in order to avoid
adverse environmental impact upon the community.
Relevant Policies: NPPF, MDD policy CC10

10. Before development commences details of any proposed external lighting scheme shall be submitted for written approval to the local planning authority. The scheme shall set out the steps that will be taken to ensure that external lighting does not cause a nuisance to local residents including future residents of the site.

Reason: To protect the occupiers of the development & and nearby premises from contamination.
Relevant Policy: NPPF, Core Strategy CP3

11. Prior to the commencement of development a sustainable construction report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. The report shall detail how the development will be constructed in order to meet the requirements of the MDD policies CC04 and CC05. Once agreed development shall be constructed in accordance with the sustainability principles agreed, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To encourage environmentally sustainable development.
Relevant Policy: NPPF, Core Strategy policy CP1, Sustainable Design and Construction SPD.

12. 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 are.
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21

13. 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 to the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. No development or other operations shall take place except in complete accordance with the details as so-approved (hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme).

b) No operations shall commence on site in connection with development hereby approved (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) until the tree protection works required by the Approved Scheme are in place 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 in writing of the local planning authority has first been sought and obtained.

Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of amenity value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and [Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

14. The works hereby approved shall not commence until a method statement for the details of the method construction of the replacement driveway for the works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The methodology should be informed by the minimum impact upon trees. The works shall be implemented in accordance with the details so-approving

Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of amenity value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and [Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

Informatives:

1. The development accords with the policies contained within the adopted development plan and there are no material considerations which warrant a different decision being taken.

2. 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 974 6302.

3. The attention of the applicant is drawn to the requirements of Section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 in respect of the minimisation of noise on construction and demolition sites. Application, under Section 61 of the Act, for prior consent to the works, can be made to the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager.

4. Thames Water wishes to inform you that it will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development.

5. The requisite Travel plan would need to comply with the latest national and local guidance:
1) NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport)
2) The Essential Guide to Travel Planning (DfT, March 2008)
3) Delivering Travel Plans Through the Planning Process (DfT, April 2009)
4) A Guide on Travel Plans for Developers (DfT)
5) Making Residential Travel Plans Work (DfT, June 2007) All accessible at:
   http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/travelplans/
   https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/improving-local-transport

Also:
WBC Transport Plan 3 and Active Travel Plan 2011 – 2026
WBC Workplace Travel Plan Guidance and Residential Travel Plan Guidance

Documents, covering workplace travel plans and residential travel plans provide local
guidance and are available on the Borough’s website.

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**PLANNING HISTORY**

The Forest school has a long planning history contained on the planning file. None of
the history is considered directly relevant to this proposal.

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**SUMMARY INFORMATION**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Proposed and existing land use(s)</th>
<th>School (Use Class D1)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Floor Space of buildings to be removed</td>
<td>0m²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Floor Space of buildings to be erected</td>
<td>1387m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in floorspace on this part of site (+/-)</td>
<td>+ 1387m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Pupil capacity</td>
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<td>Proposed Pupil capacity</td>
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**CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

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<tr>
<th>Highways</th>
<th>Revised Comments to follow in members update, conditions 4, 6, 8 are anticipated.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thames Water</td>
<td>No objection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trees and Landscapes</td>
<td>No objections subject to conditions 12-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>WBC Education Services</td>
<td>“Education Services support this application. It will provide a range of provision and extend opportunities in the local area for local children”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnersh Parish Council</td>
<td>No comments received at time of writing. (may follow in members update)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Prue Bray</td>
<td>“This email is to formally register that I have an interest in this application as I am a governor of the school and a member of the academy trust board. I therefore will not send in comments on it as a borough councillor. This has been declared on the application.”</td>
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REPRESENTATIONS

One letter of objection/concern raising the following planning issues:

- Design of the building is uninspiring to pupils
- Hours of operation may lead to noise/loss of amenity

Two letter of comment raising the following planning issues:

- Hours of operation may lead to noise/loss of amenity
- Previous construction work at the site has not been very considerate

One letter of support raising the following planning issues:

- A new sixth form centre is very much needed

APPLICANTS POINTS

- Application is required for an important education need.

PLANNING POLICY

National policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy:

CP1: Sustainable Development
CP2: Inclusive Communities
CP3: General Development Principles
CP6: Managing Travel Demand
CP7: Biodiversity

MDD DPD Local Plan:

CC02: Development Limits
CC04: Sustainable Design and construction
CC06: Noise
CC05: Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks
CC07: Parking
PLANNING ISSUES

Principle of Development

1. The site is located within a Major Development Location and as such the development is acceptable in principle, providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy aims to ensure that new development contributes to the formation of sustainable and inclusive communities through the provision of community facilities (including educational buildings), and that the requirements of children are addressed. It is recognised that the provision of a new school buildings would contribute towards addressing the requirements of children through the provision of an important community facility (as listed in Core Strategy paragraph 4.17).

2. Policy CP3 states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

3. In March 2012, The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government issued the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In paragraph 72 of the NPPF it states that great importance should be attached to ensuring that sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Paragraph 72 states that Local Planning Authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and should look to approve development that will widen choice in education. The NPPF states that great weight should be given to the need to create, expand or alter schools.

4. The proposed buildings are intended to serve both the existing pupil base at the school and provide enhanced educational buildings and ancillary facilities for the school to cater for an anticipated increase of 190 pupils at the site.

5. The school is currently served by a range of buildings and needs more modern accommodation to cater for the future need as well as to enhance the educational experience for existing pupils. The building will incorporate a number of classrooms in order to meet BB98 standards and provide larger more flexible learning space for the school.

6. Given the national and local policy background established above, it is considered that there is a very strong presumption in favour of the development at this state funded school, unless there are substantial material considerations that outweigh this policy position.

Impact on character:
7. Whilst the proposed two storey teaching block would represent a large new feature on the site, it would be largely inconspicuous from medium and long views in most directions. The building will be screened from views from the north and east by the existing school and from the south and east by residential dwellings and landscaping. A railway line also runs to the south of the site, however this is cut in to the ground at this stage of the line with vegetation running along its edges. Some very limited oblique views of the proposed building may be available between some buildings or across the playing fields from Arbor Lane, however overall the building will be relatively inconspicuous. The screening and significant separation distances from public viewpoints limit the potential visual intrusion of this scheme upon the wider landscape.

8. The building is of standard modular construction; and buildings of a similar nature and form are seen at numerous schools throughout the Borough. In terms of the detailed design of the building, the applicant has added variation by incorporating varied cladding and roofing materials. The building has a varied frontage with varied fenestration, a staggered front elevation and a canopy which further enhance the design.

9. Subject to the final agreement of materials (condition 2), it is considered that the development has the potential to create an attractive addition to the school site and will not detract from the character of the area and as such the proposal accords with the requirements of Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.

10. The access from Arbor Lane already exists, however the road is of relatively poor quality. The resurfacing and enhancement of the road will not negatively impact upon the character of the area. The car parking and other ancillary features will be inconspicuous and will appear as ordinary features within a school site. As such there are no significant character concerns with regards the appearance of this element of the scheme.

Trees and Landscape:

11. A tree survey and mitigation strategy has been submitted during the application process and the Tree and Landscape officer is satisfied that the details submitted are acceptable. Conditions 12-14 are recommended to ensure that the tree protection measures are formally agreed and that the details of the methods of construction are agreed for the replacement drive way.

Access and movement:
Mixed information has been provided by the applicant in respect of highways and therefore an assessment has been based on recent surveys undertaken by the school in relation to a revised travel plan, which the Highways officer has requested. Further measures and review procedures will be secured in the travel plan condition.

**Access:**

12. Forest School is accessed from Robinhood Lane, which is subject to a 30mph speed limit. The new sixth form block building will be accessed both from the main school entrance on Robin Hood Lane and from the improved access road connecting through the school grounds from Arbor Lane. The scheme does not include any new access points to the highway network as part of the development. The improved access will reach further into the site and will be achieved by the removal of some limited vegetation and enhancement of the existing access road. This continued dual access arrangement is considered to be acceptable to the Highway Authority.

13. A refuse point is shown at the end of the reconfigured car park adjacent to the proposed sixth form building. This location, with no turning facility will make access to the refuse facilities difficult. However, as the refuse is collected by a private management company and is located within the site, which will not affect the public highway, this is a point of reference for the applicant can amend this in the future.

14. The Travel Plan submission, which is secured by condition 4, identified information on pupils catchment areas and mode of transport to and from school. It is identified that the current cycle parking provision is inadequate and that a further 120 additional spaces are to be provided. (Secure by condition 8)

**Traffic impact:**

15. The proposed increased pupil numbers from 236 to 426, net increase of 190, is expected to generate an additional 60 trips in the morning peak hour. Based on a recent survey undertaken at the school, approximately 19.8% (38) sixth former pupils are identified to drive themselves to school.

16. Given the proportional size of the proposed development it is considered by the Highway Authority that the impact on traffic flow on local links and junctions will not be severe and it is considered that the a new revised school Travel Plan will help ensure that the increase in pupil numbers does not significantly adversely impact traffic or parking in the vicinity.

**Sustainability:**

17. The site benefits from the proximity of Winnersh Rail Station and a number of bus stops heading to a range of local destinations. There are also footways enabling pedestrian access from Robinhood Lane and Kelburne Close. There are pedestrian and cycle access points of Robinhood Lane which allow access to the school site by sustainable transport means. Given this the development is acceptable in accessibility terms. The submitted Travel Plan supports this and will aid in further promoting sustainable modes of transport.

**Parking:**
18. The plans show that an extra 38 parking spaces will be provided as part of the new facilities (excluding one used for bin storage). The Council's Parking Standards Study Report provides details on the required parking provision for this type of development. It indicates that at least 1 space per full time member of staff and 1 space for every 5 students over the age of 17 should be provided. According to these standards the additional parking is sufficient assuming there will be no significant increase in staff numbers. The applicant has been asked to provide anticipated increases in staff numbers by the committee meeting. If there is a significant increase in staff then it may be possible to promote further measures through the travel plan to reduce pupil car dependency and or formalise the parking area identified within the Travel Plan and referenced above. The Travel Plan also states that there are a further 20 spaces which are unofficial. The comparative sustainability of this school to other schools in the Borough would mean that the pupil car parking ratio can in this case be less rigorously applied.

Impact on Neighbours:

19. The building is sited over 55 metres from the nearest dwellings and as such will not have any significant impact upon residential amenity in terms of overshadowing or overbearing due to the separation distances involved, the relationships with existing buildings and separating vegetation and railway line.

20. The use of the site will remain unchanged and the proposal would not result in significantly greater proximity of school buildings to neighbouring dwellings, therefore on this basis it is not considered that any additional noise or disturbance will result from the proposal.

21. Some resident representations have expressed concerns over the potential for noise or loss of amenity as a result of the hours of operation proposed for the building. It is not considered that the proposals will lead to any significant negative impact upon residents. There are no current controls on use of the school site and the development is located over 55m from any residential dwellings, and these nearest dwellings are located on the opposing side of the railway line. Given the lack of current control on hours and that the use is not significantly more intensive than the existing use, it is not considered that there will be significant increased impact upon amenity.

Flood risk and drainage:

22. The NPPF carries forward the sequential approach to flood risk, establishing the development should be directed away from the areas at highest risk and, where development is necessary in areas at risk of flooding, it should be made safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Core Strategy Policy CP1 and MDD Local policy CC09 are consistent with this approach, requiring that new development should avoid increasing and where possible reduce flood risk.

23. The Core Strategy, which was subject to a strategic Flood Risk Assessment, identifies the site as being situated in Flood Zone 1, where the risk of flooding is low and as such all forms of development - including 'more vulnerable' uses - are acceptable. Therefore, the proposal complies with the sequential test with regards flooding. The site area is less than 1 hectare in size. In line with the guidance from the Environment Agency the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage systems is the most appropriate form of
mitigation for a site of this nature and this can be secured by condition (Condition 9).

Play space, playing fields and open space provision.

24. The proposal is located on a hard standing and grassed area to the rear of the site. Although directly adjacent to it, the land does not form part of a playing field and as such will not lead to a loss in playing fields or important open space at the school.

Sustainability Report:

25. The applicant has not submitted satisfactory Sustainable Design and Construction details at this stage; however the applicant has indicated willingness to incorporate these measures within the scheme. Whilst under normal circumstances the Authority would rather receive these details in advance of the decision, it is recognised that given the nature of the scheme and the due to the urgent essential educational need that sustainable design and construction details can be secured by pre-commencement condition (Condition 11).

Mineral extraction consultation zone

26. The proposed development is located in an area of the Borough where extraction of minerals could be possible. The Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire sets out the approach to planning for minerals which states that Local Planning Authorities will oppose development that would cause the sterilisation of minerals deposits, unless:

- the mineral deposit is of no commercial interest
- it can be demonstrated that there is an overriding need for development
- there is likely to such strong environmental or other objection that extraction of minerals would be unlikely to be permitted

27. There is evidence of historic mineral working in the wider area but there are no operational mineral workings in or adjacent to the site at present and there are no dormant mineral permissions or allocated preferred areas for future minerals working at this site.

28. The site is a school. The proposal could affect access to potential mineral reserve if any were on site, however the proposal is considered to have a negligible potential significance to mineral provision in Berkshire and as such it is unlikely that any minerals would ever be extracted from the site. Given the above constraints and the demonstrated overriding need for the development, it is considered that the proposal is not unacceptable in terms of impact on mineral extraction.

CONCLUSION

The proposal consists of the erection of a two storey building at Forest School which is a state funded secondary school. The proposal will facilitate an increase in pupil numbers of around 190 sixth form pupils, and will also provide enhanced facilities for the existing pupils however the Highway Authority is satisfied that the development can be mitigated for through the use of an effective Travel Plan (secured by condition) and
by the sustainability of the site.

It is considered that the proposals would not be harmful to the street scene or character of the area and that an enhanced school use is appropriate for this in-settlement location. The proposal does not significantly impact on neighbouring properties in terms of overbearing, overlooking or loss of light, or from the additional activity that the enhanced school use might bring.

The proposal therefore accords with the policies contained within the Development Plan and national planning policy as such this application is recommended for conditional approval.

**CONTACT DETAILS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development Management</td>
<td>0118 974 6428 / 6429</td>
<td><a href="mailto:development.control@wokingham.gov.uk">development.control@wokingham.gov.uk</a></td>
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