

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE  
PLANNING COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 12 AUGUST 2020 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.18 PM**

**Committee Members Present**

Councillors: Simon Weeks (Chairman), Chris Bowring (Vice-Chairman), Stephen Conway, Carl Doran, Pauline Jorgensen, Abdul Loyes, Andrew Mickleburgh, Malcolm Richards, Angus Ross and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

**Officers Present**

Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations, Planning Delivery  
Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager  
Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor  
Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management  
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

**Case Officers Present**

Nick Chancellor  
Stefan Fludger  
Senjuti Manna  
Graham Vaughan

**11. APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Gary Cowan.

**12. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 July 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

**MEMBERS' UPDATE**

There are a number of references to the Members' Update within these minutes. The Members' Update was circulated to all present at the meeting, and published on the WBC website. A copy is attached.

**13. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**14. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS**

There were no applications recommended for deferral, or withdrawn.

**15. APPLICATION NO.201149 - LAND EAST OF OAK AVENUE SOUTH OF  
SADLER CRESCENT AND NORTH OF A329 LONDON ROAD RG40 1LH**

**Proposal:** Full planning application for a park and ride facility comprising access, car and motorcycle parking spaces, bicycle storage, bus stops, landscaping, drainage and ancillary development.

**Applicant:** Wokingham Borough Council (WBC)

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 23 to 58.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Various corrections to references of neighbouring property addresses;
- Confirmation that that assessment of impact on residential amenity was undertaken in relation to the above mentioned properties;
- An annotated version of the site plan was circulated to Members for their consideration.

In line with the given deadlines, one public written submission was received for this item. This submission was circulated to Members in advance, and noted on the evening. The submission as provided can be found below.

WSP provided the following statement in support of the application on behalf of the applicant:

- 1 “The Scheme is part of a local commitment to relieve congestion along key road corridors and is supported by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) in their work to deliver cross-boundary solutions to local transport network issues. The proposed Site was previously identified as part of the Keephatch Beech development, and has been designated as a Park and Ride (P&R) facility within WBC’s Core Strategy (2010), reinforcing the case that a P&R Scheme at this location forms part of a long-established preference for the Council’s transport solutions for reducing congestion and improving connectivity to Wokingham and Bracknell.
- 2 The Scheme would complement other A329 strategic corridor improvement schemes promoted by both WBC and BFC in contributing to mitigate the impact arising from new developments. The Scheme will provide 254 car parking spaces and provide an alternative travel choice along the A329 corridor. The Scheme aligns with the Council’s ambitions as the Site is allocated in WBC’s Local Transport Plan (Strategy 2011 – 2026).
- 3 The desired outcome of the Scheme is to improve accessibility through public transport by providing an alternative method of transport into Wokingham and Bracknell town centres, which would encourage more people to switch from using the private car to a more sustainable transport mode. By removing car trips, the Scheme would result in improved journey times to Wokingham and Bracknell town centres, especially at peak times which would have beneficial effects on reducing congestion and therefore driver stress, whilst facilitating air quality improvements and noise reduction. Overall, the Scheme will ensure public transport is more inclusive by ensuring good quality bus services to and from key destinations in the area.
- 4 The car park design include spaces and charging points for electric vehicles which will help reduce the emissions that contribute to climate change. In 2019 WBC declared a “climate emergency”, the Scheme contributes to the steps WBC is taking to reduce adverse environmental impacts and improve public health in the area, and to make WBC carbon neutral by 2030.

- 5 The Planning, Design and Access Statement (PDAS) submitted with the planning application provides an overview of the Scheme; sets out the need for the Scheme; assessed the material considerations, and examined how any residual adverse effects will be mitigated. The PDAS has assessed the Scheme against relevant planning policy and material consideration.”

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Malcolm Richards commented that as a Ward Member for this area, he had been aware for some time of the proposed development. Malcolm added that should this land not be developed into a park and ride, the land would revert to the developer. Malcolm was of the opinion that this was a good location for a park and ride facility, with frequent existing buses passing by the site. Malcolm sought clarification regarding the hours which lighting would be operational on the site, and queried whether a vending machine could be located on site. Nick Chancellor, case officer, stated that there was currently no detailed proposals for lighting hours, however there was a proposed condition to control lighting hours. Nick added that later in the process, when more was known about how the site would be managed, more detail would be available regarding lighting. Nick stated that there were no details regarding a vending unit, however there was scope for small outbuildings such as a toilet block.

Stephen Conway stated that he had some reservations regarding this application, including whether this was the right location for a park and ride in the North Wokingham SDL. However, Stephen stated that the Committee had to look at the application in front of them. Stephen stated his hope that adequate protections including landscaping would be provided to protect local residents.

Carl Doran queried which buses would serve the proposed park and ride, whether a bus lane was planned on the A329, and what would be the charging structure for use of the park and ride. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that the existing 4 and X4 services ran past the proposed site, at an approximate frequency of 4 services per hour. Judy added that a bus lane was not currently planned on the A329, and the fee charging structure had yet to be finalised. Carl added that the business case for this application relied on economic sustainability under the NPPF, which in his opinion would not be achieved by the proposals as there was to be no dedicated bus service, and the overall proposals would not be an attractive proposition for potential users. Judy Kelly stated that there was a sum of S106 money set aside for public transport provision within the North Wokingham SDL. Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations and Planning Delivery, stated that the proposal would serve both Wokingham and Bracknell, and possibly Twyford in the future. Connor added that this scheme was funded by the LEP, and there was potential for a dedicated bus lane and dedicated bus service in the future.

Pauline Jorgensen commented that there were proposals to protect the nearby ancient woodland and residential accommodation with landscaping. Pauline added that there was no local train station at the proposed site as there was at the Winnersh park and ride, and therefore people would be more likely to catch the bus into Reading. Pauline commented that the land was being handed over to WBC, the business case had been approved by the LEP, and the LEP were funding the scheme.

Abdul Loyes queried whether there had been any significant changes to the application since its conception in 2015. Nick Chancellor stated that the proposals in front of Members was what was expected from the outline application and reserved matters.

Andrew Mickleburgh sought assurances that the impact of the proposals on both existing and future housing had been given substantial weight, queried whether the screening matrix process had caused any harm to neighbouring properties, and asked whether the business case was material consideration, and what 'finer details' could be amended should the application be approved. Nick Chancellor stated that the screening process had been carried out prior to the application, and the conclusion was that it did not cause significant harm to either existing or future neighbouring properties. Nick stated that minor details were commonly looked at by officers after approval, and if any aspects were deemed unacceptable then professional officers would reassess these specific aspects.

Simon Weeks sought clarification that the Committee needed to assess this application based on material planning considerations. Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor, confirmed this to be correct.

Angus Ross queried whether the land would remain as WBC land after handover should the park and ride fail, whether the CCTV was live monitored or recorded, and whether the hours of operation had been finalised. Nick Chancellor stated that the S106 was conditioned only for a park and ride, therefore should the park and ride fail the land would go back to the developer. Nick added that he was not aware of any detail regarding the CCTV, however this would be covered by condition. The provisional hours of operation were 7am-7pm, however the parking management scheme would allow more nuance and control.

A number of Members raised concerns with the provisional hours of operation were insufficient for a site to be used as a park and ride. By contrast, a number of Members were concerned that this was not a planning consideration. It was proposed by Angus Ross, and seconded by Pauline Jorgensen that hours of operation be conditioned between 6.30am and 11pm. Upon being put the vote this proposal was lost.

It was proposed that hours of operation and hours of lighting operation be agreed in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee and the Ward Members. This was unanimously agreed by the Committee.

**RESOLVED** That application number 201149 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 24 to 32, with the hours of operation and hours of lighting operation to be agreed in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee and the Ward Members as resolved by the Committee.

**16. APPLICATION NO.200378 - DINTON ACTIVITY CENTRE, SANDFORD LANE, HURST, RG10 0SU**

**Proposal:** Full application for the erection of an activity centre, with activity hall, changing facilities, classroom facility, ancillary offices and café, landscaping and parking following demolition of the existing Dinton Activity Centre.

**Applicant:** Wokingham Borough Council (WBC)

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 59 to 106.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Amended condition 2, to now include the relevant drawing numbers;
- Amended condition 14;
- Replacement of informative 3, and new informative 4;
- Amended condition 19;
- Removal of paragraph 60 of the officer report;
- Correction that the floor space is 622 square meters, however an employment skills plan was still triggered as the site was over 1 hectare and this application was therefore a major application;
- Confirmation that the proposals would create 3 additional permanent jobs, and other more variable seasonal jobs during the summer months.

In line with the given deadlines, one public written submission was received for this item. This submission was circulated to Members in advance, and noted on the evening. The submission as provided can be found below.

The following statement in support of the application was provided on behalf of the applicant:

“The proposals presented here this evening are to replace and expand existing important community uses that are offered on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council. The existing Dinton Activity Centre has seen better days and the proposals presented here are to provide modern, high-quality and sustainable buildings, to allow the Council to continue offering a range of outdoor activities, along with important Council run courses.

The improved facilities, whilst not expanding the day-to-day offering of the centre during the peak season, will allow the centre to operate through a larger portion of the year, providing important facilities to children and adults. This is largely thanks to the proposed new activity hall and improved indoor classroom area that can be opened up to provide additional lecture theatre style space.

The proposals are a result of extensive pre-application discussions with the Council's officers, presentations to members of the public and careful review of potential impacts that the proposed development may have on the locality. It is considered that the resultant

development has been carefully considered and will improve the offer at the site, whilst having no impact on neighbouring properties.

Whilst not a specific requirement of this proposal, due to its scale, a number of sustainable technologies will be utilised in the building to ensure it reduces its energy consumption needs and lowers its CO2 output.

Members, the scheme presented here this evening has been carefully considered, accords with relevant planning policy and provides a valuable and much needed contribution to local community services provided by the Council. As such, the Council's Officer has recommended approval of the application and I request members support the positive recommendation and approve this application."

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Simon Weeks commented that the buildings at the existing activity centre were tired in appearance, and this application was an opportunity to improve the existing offering.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried what would happen to the existing tenants during the construction phase. Stefan Fludger, case officer, stated that it was up to WBC as to who would use the buildings, however it was conditioned to allow for the retention of the existing buildings during the construction phase to allow existing activities to continue. Rachelle queried whether there were any other sustainable transport routes planned to access the site. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that the proposed travel plan would look at sustainable travel to and from the site, including cycle storage.

Angus Ross sought clarification that the elevated walkway to the Emmbrook had in fact been removed from the scheme. Stefan Fludger confirmed this to be correct, and added that reference to the elevated walkway in paragraph 43 of the officer report was incorrect.

Malcolm Richards queried whether sprinklers would be installed in the training room, as it had an educational function. Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management, stated that sprinklers were covered under building regulations and were not a material planning consideration.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried why the proposal was not aiming for excellent or outstanding on the BREEAM standard for sustainable developments. Justin Turvey stated that there were no requirements for an excellent or outstanding BREEAM rating, and going above the recommended 'very good' rating required a policy justification. Justin added that an excellent rating added an additional significant cost to the development.

Pauline Jorgensen queried whether consideration had been given to restricting the regular hire of the hall for events such as music. Stefan Fludger stated that the nearest dwelling was approximately 42 metres away, and the proposal was for an activity centre with other ancillary uses which came with restrictions.

A number of Members sought clarification as to whether photovoltaic panels would be present on the proposed building. Stefan Fludger confirmed this to be correct.

**RESOLVED** That application number 200378 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 60 to 68, amended conditions 2, 4 and 19 as set

out in the Members' Update, replacement of informative 3 and addition of informative 4 as set out in the Members' Update.

#### **17. APPLICATION NO.200951 - SONNING GOLF CLUB, DUFFIELD ROAD, WOODLEY, RG4 6GJ**

**Proposal:** Application for the approval of reserved matters pursuant to outline planning consent 161529 (APP/X0360/W/17/3167142) for the erection of 13 dwellings with associated highway works, public open space and landscaping. Details of Layout, Appearance, Landscaping and Scale to be determined.

**Applicant:** Mr Chris Rees, Alfred Homes

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 107 to 164.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Amendment to recommendation A;
- Updated to condition 2 to include the approved plans.

In line with the given deadlines, four public written submissions were received for this item. These submissions were circulated to Members in advance, and noted on the evening. The submissions as provided can be found below.

Sonning Parish Council provided the following submission in objection to the application:

"Sonning is a Limited Development Location with limited access to shopping facilities and opportunities to access facilities within acceptable walking distance. Occupiers would rely heavily on cars. Properties immediately to the left of the site are low, 1 ½ to 2 storey, individually designed dwellings, contributing to the area's rural character. The plot, together with the Golf Club is in the countryside, where inappropriate development is considered 'harmful' and acts as a green buffer between Sonning and Woodley.

The outline plans (161529), allowed at appeal, included an illustrative view of the proposed development, showing modest detached 1 ½ storey dwellings, some detached, some semi-detached and a terrace of three.

The proposed dwellings are large 2 ½ storey dwellings of some height, that will tower over neighbouring dwellings and aimed at larger families than previously indicated. The 8 '5' bedroom, detached dwellings all have 'bonus' rooms on the second floor and must be considered as 6-bedroomed. Therefore, is sufficient parking provided?

These changes will have a greater impact on the area than previously suggested at Appeal and represents overdevelopment of the site and are out of keeping with the area due to their height, bulk and size.

The Appeal Inspector said of 161529 '***it is likely that the layout would be of an increased density and less spacious than the majority of surrounding development. The residential development would also diminish the existing value of green open space when viewed from adjacent residential properties***' This assessment was based on the illustrative view provided with the application. The impact will be so much greater if the proposed much larger dwellings are approved.

The Inspector also said: '***The proposal would be contrary to the countryside protection, environmental quality and landscape protection aims of policies CP1, CP3, CP9 and CP11 of the Core Strategy and policies CC02 and TB21 of the Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014 (MDD)***'.

In December 2019, Sonning Parish Council carried out a speed survey along that stretch of Pound Lane with support from WBC Highway Officers, in December 2019. A daily vehicle count of almost 7000 a day southbound towards the proposed entrance/exit, which equates to 14000 vehicles per day. Speeds of 65 mph and 60 mph, were recorded, indicating how dangerous the proposed exit would be, which is close to the scene of a recent fatal accident."

Paul Etherington, resident, provided the following submission in objection to the application:

"The planning reasons highlighted in my, and many others' previous submissions in relation to this site/development remain, but the Planning Inspectorate regrettably elected to ignore them for reason of land supply which remains contested.

I would highlight that since the previous substantive application, Pound Lane, that many objectors highlighted as a dangerous stretch of road, has tragically seen a fatal accident. We highlighted:

- speeding
- flooding
- that the proposed access point is on a bend
- dangerously close to the points at which Mustard Lane, Duffield Road & West Drive join Pound Lane

Had the applicant chosen to provide site access through the golf club car park (ringed on their plan) perhaps at the indicated point into the car park it would be considerably less dangerous than the position proposed.

It would also avoid the developer cutting through the tree line/verge which are owned by Wokingham Borough and covered by Tree Preservation Order TPO 1505/2015. Notwithstanding that one mature TPO'd oak tree was mysteriously felled over a Bank Holiday weekend, it is sprouting well from what was left and there are still a number of trees and an attractive hedgerow making up the street scene (which officers previously highlighted as valuable)."

Chris Rees, applicant, provided the following submission in support of the application:

"1.1 This Statement has been prepared in support of the consideration of the Reserved Matters Application on land at Sonning Golf Club, pursuant to the Outline Planning Approval granted for the erection of 13 dwellings on land adjacent to the Golf Club, at which point the principle and the vehicular access for thirteen dwellings was approved.

1.2 The Reserved Matters application has been the subject of a pre-application submission with the Borough Council and has therefore been shaped by the advice received from Officers concerning the siting, scale, landscaping and appearance of the houses in line with best practice advocated by the Council.

1.3 As per the Outline Approval, the proposal consists of eight open market properties and five affordable housing properties, set around a central landscaped green. The houses are tenure blind and adopt a classical approach to their architecture and built form.

1.4 The proposal has been supported by a detailed landscape and planting plan, the focus of which is the shared green space within the centre of the development to which the residents have access and can enjoy.

1.5 The application has been the subject of full due diligence with account taken of the distances and orientation to the adjacent residential dwelling to the north and the long-term preservation of the trees on site subject to the tree preservation order.

1.6 Moreover, the proposal has been shaped and formed with Officers, with no objections from any statutory consultee and with a resulting architectural approach that will add to the character of the area and deliver an array of housing types and tenure.

1.7 With the principal of residential development and the access already established, we would respectfully ask that the outstanding Reserved Matters for the 13 new homes before the Committee today are approved.”

Michael Firmager, Ward Member, provided the following submission in objection to the application:

“I was aware this application as a major development would come before the Planning Committee if officers were minded to approve the application. However, I listed the application as the local Borough Council Member.

I am against this application for the following reasons:-

- 1) It is out of character with the area. Also, it is overbearing and with restricted room for development;
- 2) It is inconsistent with the conditions set out by the Appeal Inspector, especially with the increase in the height of the buildings, which is of detriment to the character to the village;
- 3) The access will be onto Pound Lane causes me great concern, which is extremely dangerous being on a bend. Pound Lane itself can be either a fast road or one with traffic jams depending upon the amount of traffic on the A4 going into Reading or onto the A329(M). This development will only add more traffic to an already over loaded road network.

I hope this committee will take on my comments mentioned here and before, together with those of Sonning Parish Council and the Sonning & Sonning Eye Society and refuse this application.”

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Simon Weeks commented that an Inspector had approved a previous application for this site at appeal, which approved access to the site. Simon queried whether the Inspector would have been aware that a TPO tree would be required to be removed at the site. Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management, stated that an inevitable result of the Inspector’s decision to approve the grant of planning permission was that TPO trees would have to be removed. Simon queried how many new trees would be planted on

the site. Senjuti Manna, case officer, stated that 25 new trees and 16 large shrubs would be planted as part of this application.

Chris Bowring commented that although the outline application had approved the access to the site, the layout of that proposal was also a material consideration. Chris added that the Inspector had commented that the 13 new houses would help to provide for the housing shortfall in the area.

Stephen Conway commented that the Committee were constrained by the Inspectors previous decision regarding this site. Stephen added that there was an unfortunate relationship between the garages of plots 2 & 3 and neighbouring property no.101a, however this was unlikely to constitute a reason for refusal.

Carl Doran queried whether the junction improvement had been carried out, and whether the affordable housing units were of a similar scale and kind as the other housing units. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that the technical approval for the junction improvement was going through at the moment, and the improvements should be carried out shortly after approval. Justin Turvey stated that the affordable housing units were the same as the other housing units in a planning sense, as they met the relevant planning tests. Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) affordable housing team had specified their preferred mix of affordable units for this site, based on local need.

Pauline Jorgensen queried what the bonus rooms could be used for. Justin Turvey stated that a bonus room was a type of terminology used by developers, and that in essence the room could be used by the eventual buyer for any desired usage within reason.

Abdul Loyes queried why plot 13 had a 10m rear amenity distance, compared to the 11m rear amenity distance that plots 10 through 12 for example. Senjuti Manna stated that although the Borough Design Guide suggested an 11m rear amenity distance, the TPO trees to the rear of plot 13 constrained the length of the garden. However, plot 13 was wider than plots 10 through 12, and therefore had a larger rear garden area overall and was therefore deemed acceptable.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried how the density of the site compared to the outline application, asked why the application before the Committee included two and a half storey buildings compared to one and a half storey buildings considered at appeal, and queried whether the impact on local services such as GP surgeries and schools as a result of the additional housing was a material consideration. Simon Weeks confirmed that any development of any size added additional strain for local services, and S106 or CIL contributions funded local amenity provision. Senjuti Manna stated that the density of 16.25 habitable rooms per hectare was the same as proposed at the allowed appeal. Senjuti added that plans which the Inspector considered had buildings up to 10.2m in height which was equivalent to two and a half storeys, therefore there was no significant difference. Senjuti added that the site now had an additional 300m<sup>2</sup> plot coverage compared to the plot considered by the Inspector.

Malcolm Richards queried how the 13 unallocated parking spaces would be managed. Senjuti Manna stated that condition 8 included a car parking management plan, which would also cover unallocated parking spaces on the site.

Angus Ross asked for confirmation as to how the required number of parking spaces was calculated. Judy Kelly confirmed that this calculation was based on a formula which was

inputted into a spreadsheet based on the number of habitable rooms on site. Judy added that a garage was classed as half of a parking space.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried whether photovoltaic panels were being implemented at the proposed development. Justin Turvey stated that there was no indication that photovoltaic panels were planned for the site, and this was not a planning matter. Simon Weeks added that until this issue was backed up by local and national planning policy WBC could not insist on an applicant installing photovoltaic panels at a development.

Simon Weeks proposed that an informative be added, stating that WBC was keen to be an early adopter for new developments within the Borough to install technology to minimise carbon output, and the Committee wished to encourage the applicant to incorporate appropriate technologies at this development to meet WBC's goal. This was unanimously agreed by the Committee, and added to the list of informatives as contained in the officer report.

**RESOLVED** That application number 200951 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 108 to 112, amendment to Recommendation A an updated condition 2 as set out in the Members' Update, and additional informative asking the applicant to consider installing technologies to minimise the carbon output of the dwellings, as resolved by the Committee.

**18. APPLICATION NO.201143 - LAND ADJACENT TO 166 NINE MILE RIDE, FINCHAMPSTEAD**

*Simon Weeks took no part in the discussion or voting for this item.*

*Chris Bowring assumed the Chair for the duration of this item.*

**Proposal:** Full planning application for the proposed addition of four pitches to an existing four pitch caravan park for gypsy and travellers, plus reconfiguration of existing site.

**Applicant:** Mr D Reed

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 165 to 188.

The Committee were advised that there were no Members' Updates.

In line with the given deadlines, three public written submissions were received for this item. These submissions were circulated to Members in advance, and noted on the evening. The submissions as provided can be found below.

Gordon Veitch, Finchamstead Parish Council, provided the following submission in objection to the application:

"We object to this inappropriate overdevelopment of the site. The proposed development would cause issues with privacy for residents of The Dittons due to the close proximity of the static/mobile homes.

We believe WBC currently has adequate provisions for gypsy and traveller pitches. We understand the existing plans appear inaccurate, the layout of existing pitches is incorrect and do not represent the current layout of the site.

If WBC is minded to approve this application we ask that conditions are added to any approval:

- Siting of mobile homes to be an acceptable distance from adjoining properties.
- Landscaping to offer satisfactory visual protection to existing properties.
- Light pollution, any street lights to be positioned and directed within the site.”

Emily Temple, agent, provided the following submission in support of the application:

“We are pleased to bring forward this site allocated in the draft local plan update, for prospective development. As Councillors may know, the land at number 166 has been home to an existing gypsy and traveller site since 2008 when two pitches were approved, with expansion to 4 pitches following planning approval in 2014.

The site is located immediately adjacent to the Modest Development Location of Finchampstead. The site is operated by the occupants and owner of 166 Nine Mile Ride; being so close they are able to keep a watchful eye over the running of the site. The development would also use the existing access and hardstanding so there would be no apparent visual change when viewed from the road.

The current council need for pitches is identified as 5.5 pitches. Whilst some permissions have been granted they have not yet been implemented. Being an extension of an existing site, the land at number 166 is both suitable for development, available and deliverable immediately. This meets an ongoing need for household expansion as existing Gypsy Traveller children in the area grow up and form their own independent households. A larger site such as proposed is well below the 15 pitch maximum set in Government advice, whilst still accommodating larger single family groups.

I am pleased to note there is no objection from statutory consultees such as Highways and Environmental Health. I can confirm a written response was sent to a Planning Contravention Notice issued to the applicant during the course of the application. The site is being operated fully in accordance with the existing permission for 4 pitches, and the applicant is committed to complying with the conditional requirements indicated by officers, such as landscaping, and a legal agreement to secure SPA mitigation.

I hope that you are reassured by my comments today. We trust that we have worked well with officers throughout the application process to date, responding to queries as requested. It's therefore respectfully requested that your officer's recommendation be supported today. Thank you.”

Simon Weeks, Ward Member, provided the following submission in objection to the application:

“Residents have expressed significant concern about this proposal to double the number of pitches on this site within a residential area. 4 pitches were allowed on appeal in 2009.

The site is constrained as follows:

- a TPO applies to the site;
- 12 established residential houses share a boundary with this site;
- the site is designated as Countryside;

- WBC currently has a 9.09 years land supply for gypsy and traveller pitches;
- the application conflicts with a CP11.

Despite the TPO, a number of trees on the site have been lost but as you will see at paragraph 31, it is noted trees *are shown illustratively*. We should adopt a precautionary approach and secure an Arboricultural Assessment first, to ensure no further harm to the remaining protected trees.

Looking at the proposed site layout, you will see that 3 of the new proposed pitches (numbers 5, 6 and 7) are positioned right on the boundary and will impact on the amenity of numbers 8 and 9 The Dittons. I have received repeated complaints over the last few years about burning of plastic waste and noise, so the positioning of additional pitches so close to the boundary is inappropriate and likely to exacerbate this problem.

It is possible the site could be re-configured to minimise the potential impact on neighbours. Additionally an appropriate survey of the TPO is required to support this application, so I cannot support this application and would urge the Committee to refuse it in its current form.”

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Pauline Jorgensen queried how Members could assess the relation of the proposals to the properties at The Dittons if the pitch positions were only indicative. Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management, stated that it could be conditioned that additional landscaping be provided for screenage, or that pitches not be situated in a certain area of the site.

Malcolm Richards queried whether the proposed layout of the pitches was deemed as acceptable to officers. Graham Vaughan, case officer, stated that the proposed layout was acceptable to officers, and demonstrable harm needed to be shown in order for an application to be refused.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether the site could accommodate an additional four caravan pitches whilst maintaining residential amenity, queried whether there were any large trees due to be cut down, asked whether there was any additional planting planned for the outer site to screen neighbouring properties, and queried whether there was sufficient room on site for non-caravan parking. Graham Vaughan stated that officers were satisfied that the site could accommodate a total of eight caravan pitches without sacrificing residential amenity. Graham stated that if the site damaged any root protection areas of nearby trees, the siting of the caravans could be altered. Graham stated that condition 3 required an approved landscaping scheme to be submitted to the Council prior to development. Judy Kelly stated that there was no specific parking standards for gypsy and traveller sites, however there was sufficient room for parking of vehicles on site.

A number of Members were concerned about the separation distances between the proposed and existing pitches. Justin Turvey stated that the nearby Dittons residential properties were terraced, and a clear reason needed to be given as to why those dwellings could be terraced but caravans could not be grouped together.

Stephen Conway commented that the proposals were in contrary to CP11, however there were special rulings for gypsy and traveller sites. Justin Turvey stated that officers had

accepted that the proposals were contrary to CP11, however TB10 of the MDD anticipated this conflict and therefore officers had deemed the proposals as acceptable.

Angus Ross proposed that the application be deferred in order for a site visit, or virtual replacement, to be undertaken to assess whether the proposals conformed to separation distance guidelines as set out in the Borough Design Guide, and to assess whether the proposed layout of pitches was practically workable whilst not causing harm to nearby residential dwellings. This proposal was seconded by Chris Bowring and put to the vote.

**RESOLVED** That application number 201143 be deferred, to allow a site visit or virtual replacement to be undertaken to assess whether the proposals conformed to separation distance guidelines as set out in the Borough Design Guide, and to assess whether the proposed layout of pitches was practically workable whilst not causing harm to nearby residential dwellings.

***Simon Weeks resumed the Chair.***