

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2021 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.40 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Chris Bowring (Chairman), Angus Ross (Vice-Chairman), Sam Akhtar, Gary Cowan, Carl Doran, Pauline Jorgensen, Rebecca Margetts, Andrew Mickleburgh and Bill Soane

Committee Members in Attendance Virtually

Councillors: Rachelle-Shepherd DuBey

Councillors Present and Speaking

Councillors: Peter Dennis, David Hare and Clive Jones

Officers Present

Connor Corrigan, Service Manager - Planning and Delivery
Chris Easton, Head of Transport, Drainage, and Compliance
Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor
Justin Turvey, Operational Manager - Development Management
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

Case Officers Present

Joanna Carter
Natalie Jarman
Senjuti Manna
Baldeep Pulahi

54. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Stephen Conway.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey attended the meeting virtually, and was therefore marked as in attendance, and was not able to propose, second, or vote on items.

55. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 November 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to correcting Bill Soane to be an apology for the meeting.

The Committee gave their thanks to Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management, for his years of service and advice to the Committee. The Committee wished him well in his future role.

56. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Andrew Mickleburgh declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 59, Land off Meldreth Way. Andrew stated that he would leave the room for the duration of this item, and take no part in the discussion or vote.

Pauline Jorgensen commented that her address was listed as objecting to item number 59, Land off Meldreth Way, however it was not her who had made the objection and she came into the meeting with an open mind.

57. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

Item number 60, Toutley East (Land adjacent to Toutley Depot), was withdrawn from the agenda.

58. APPLICATION NO.212509 - 160 READING ROAD, WOKINGHAM, RG41 1LH

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a 2no.storey plus loft level dwelling with an integrated garage to include 2No roof lights following the demolition of existing bungalow including alterations to the vehicular/pedestrian entrance

Applicant: G Lupton

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 9 to 42.

The Committee were advised that there were no updates within the Supplementary Planning Agenda.

Peter Mathers, neighbour, spoke in objection to the application. Peter thanked the applicant's architect for submitting revised proposals which were a clear improvement over previous versions, as a result of concerns raised by Members at their October Committee meeting. Peter commented that despite the revised plans, a number of concerns remained. Peter stated that his property was shown as being 8.2m high within the proposed elevations document, whereas the actual height of his property was 7.2m. Peter felt that this had allowed the architect to show number 162 to be the same height as number 164, and number 160 as lower than 162 which was false. Peter stated that number 162 was in fact lower than number 164, and the proposals would allow for number 160 to be higher than number 162, disrupting the downward slope of roof lines in line with the downward slope of the road. Peter was of the opinion that the architect had reduced the proposals from 6 bedrooms, to five bedrooms, and now to four bedrooms in an attempt to gain approval for the largest house possible, which Peter felt was an abuse of process and should warrant refusal. Peter stated that the Reading Road was a wide road and your eye was naturally drawn to one side of the road. On the even numbered side of the road, the average height of these houses was 7.36m, and the proposed dwelling would be over a meter higher than the average property height on this side of the road. Peter queried why the proposed property needed to be considerably higher than surrounding properties, given that the proposal was for a two-storey dwelling. If approved, Peter asked that the property be restricted a maximum height of 8.4m. Peter stated that the property was at risk of surface water flooding, and the applicant's property had flooded 14 years prior. Peter asked that the Committee refuse the application, and encouraged the applicant to come back with a more reasonable proposal.

Peter Lindley-Hughes, architect, spoke in support of the application. Peter stated that the designs had been amended to take in to account the concerns of neighbouring properties, concerns raised at the previous Committee meeting, and to "de-risk" the scheme. Peter stated that the third floor internal level had been addressed, as had the issues relating to the windows, height and massing, whilst the garage had also been omitted in the front garden, and the dormer windows from the third floor were no longer proposed. Peter stated that he was disappointed that neighbouring objections remained despite positive email conversations. Peter added that the ridge height of number 162 was 4m higher than the existing bungalow, whilst number 158 was 1.3m higher. Peter stated that the proposed home would be 1m lower than number 162, and only 1.8m taller than number 158. Peter felt that the development of the neighbouring property, number 162, was acceptable at the

time despite being an overbearing 4m taller than the neighbouring bungalow, and as such the development of number 160 was also acceptable as it was tailored to the changing need of larger family homes over time. Peter added that in his mind, the Committee needed to review whether the correct balance had been struck between suitable scale and mass aligned to planning policy whilst ensuring the future of the proposed home was fit for purpose.

Imogen Shepherd-DuBey, Wokingham Town Council, spoke in objection to the application. Imogen stated that she was pleased to see that the loft conversion had been changed to only one room for storage purposes. Imogen added that her remaining concerns centred on the proposed property being large, whilst there appeared to be some dispute over the height of the proposal.

Sam Akhtar commented that the revised proposals seemed reasonable, and from examining the street scene the proposals would appear to fit in with other properties. Sam sought additional clarity regarding surface water flooding. Baldeep Pulahi, case officer, confirmed that condition 4 had been amended and the applicant would be required to submit further details to ensure that issues relating to surface water were covered.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether the drawing on agenda page 37 was accurate, and if it was not could the errors be enough to effect the street scene. Baldeep Pulahi confirmed that she was believed the drawing on agenda page 37 to be correct.

Pauline Jorgensen queried why roof storage required roof lights, and how the roof storage would be accessed. Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management, stated that the roof lights to the front and rear remained, however the overall floor space was minimal. Justin added that the roof storage would be accessed by stairs.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried whether harm could be caused should the roof storage be used in an alternative way, for example as an office. Justin Turvey stated that the officer opinion was that harm would not be caused in such a use case.

Chris Bowring commented that from the site visit, it was very difficult to see more than one property at a time from the street.

Carl Doran queried whether the drainage condition was amended from the standard wording, and whether the proposed height could be conditioned to not exceed 8.4m. Baldeep Pulahi confirmed that condition 4 was amended following discussions with the Drainage officer, and the applicant could only build the proposed property up to the height within the approved plans, which was 8.4m.

RESOLVED That application number 212509 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 9 to 14.

59. APPLICATION NO.211686 - LAND OFF MELDRETH WAY, LOWER EARLEY
Andrew Mickleburgh declared a prejudicial interest in this item, and in doing so left the room and took no part in the discussion or vote.

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a food store (Use Class E), 43 no. dwellings (Use Class C3) and associated access, servicing, parking and landscaping.

Applicant: Lower Earley Properties Ltd.

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 43 to 118.

The Committee were advised that the Supplementary Planning Agenda included reference to an additional letter of objection from Jigsaw Planning on behalf of ASDA, requesting two additional reasons for refusal, and reference to the existing officer responses within the report.

Geoff Littler, Earley Town Council, spoke in objection of the application. Geoff stated that the Earley Town Council Planning Committee had considered this application on two occasions, June 2021 and October 2021. Geoff stated that each of the reasons for refusal had been voted on separately by the Town Council Planning Committee, and were all agreed unanimously. Geoff added that the current development plan clearly showed that the land of the subject application was designated as countryside, was not allocated for development, and was outside of the development boundary. Geoff stated that the policy CP11 afforded protection from development to land within that designation as countryside, unless it fell within specified exceptions, which in this case the application did not fall within any of those exceptions. Geoff stated that this parcel of land had remained in its natural state since the inception of Lower Earley, with exception to some partial degradation when the developer undertook some scrub clearance. Geoff added that within the first iteration of the Local Plan Update, this land had been put forward as local green space, and it had been proposed once more for consideration as local green space within the current consultation of the Local Plan Update.

Malcolm Gaudreau, neighbour, spoke in objection to the application. Malcolm stated that he had lived in the area for 34 years, and his property was side on to Swallows Meadow via the gated entrance. Malcolm added that 358 objections had been received, and since the inception of Lower Earley Swallows Meadow had been an open green space, without a lock or prohibition of access, and the grass had been maintained over time. Malcolm stated that many different species were present on the site, including deer, badger, and muntjac deer. Malcolm stated that vehicles regularly exceeded the speed limit on the road, and the addition of a supermarket could lead to serious accidents. Malcolm added that the proposals would only add to existing congestion issues on the road, whilst the effects of the proposals would be devastating for residents of Witcham Close via additional noise, light, vehicle emissions and HGV movements in addition to a loss of privacy and a reduction in house prices. Malcolm stated that flooding was already an issue in the area, and the proposals would only add to this issue. Malcolm concluded by stating there was not the need for an additional supermarket in the area, whereas green spaces within Earley were at a premium.

Andy Jansons, applicant, spoke in support of the application. Andy stated that Jansons property had developed 25 properties within the Thames Valley over the past 19 years, including an application in 2014 for a project on Peach Street and Cross Street which also had a recommendation for refusal which the Committee overturned at the time. Andy added that Lower Earley Properties was a wholly owned subsidiary of Jansons property, and the proposals would include 43 houses, forty percent social housing, and a pre-let supermarket to Lidl. Andy stated that the application had received 600 letters of support, and the land was privately owned via a freehold purchased from the University of Reading. Andy was of the opinion that the site was an edge of settlement development, bounded by two roads being Lower Earley Way and Meldreth Way, was not within the greenbelt and

was an obvious in-fill site. Andy commented that officer feedback and the timing of the feedback had been challenging, including a refusal reason for detrimental impact on acoustic amenity despite no objection from the environmental health officer, and a recommended refusal from highways as neither the applicant nor highways officers have had sufficient time to deal with the issues. Andy stated that he hoped that planning applications would be dealt with on their merits and not on technical issues, and asked that the application be deferred to allow time for technical issues to be resolved prior to returning to the Committee.

David Hare, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. David stated that he lived less than half a mile away from the site, and there were a variety of reasons for refusal of this application. David added that his main concern was that this piece of land was a designated countryside area, and Earley Town Council had asked for this land to be designated as local green space prior to this application being submitted. David stated that the idea of including this site as part of a larger nature reserve corridor was being considered, and the retention of the site was crucial for biodiversity and as a carbon sink. David stated that this site was a valuable part of Earley which allowed local residents to make use of the footpaths on the site and enjoy the surrounding nature. David commented that part of the site had been destroyed by the applicant, however many trees were now subject to a TPO. David added that badgers, foxes, bats and many other animals could be found on the site, and a very valuable scrubland was found on the site where the housing was proposed. David concluded by stating that the application should be refused, and reiterated the importance for local residents, wildlife and biodiversity in retaining the site in its natural state.

Clive Jones, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. Clive stated that his constituents had never expected this to be an application for development as it was a designated countryside area. Clive felt that the proposal for a supermarket would be overbearing and would dominate the views of local houses whilst creating unacceptable noise throughout the day all-the-while having a detrimental impact on the area with several homes losing their acoustic privacy and amenity. Clive stated that a social media survey undertaken by himself and colleagues revealed that 82% of residents did not want improved retail choices in Earley whilst 79% did not want new homes. Clive added that the planning documents showed 57 respondents in favour of the proposals, whilst 24 of those did not live in the Earley (RG6) area, whilst of the 358 objectors on 6 of them did not live in the Earley area. Clive urged the Committee to refuse this application, as it was an unacceptable development within the countryside which have a detrimental effect on local residents within the area.

Chris Bowring sought clarification regarding the height of the supermarket compared to the height of the residential dwellings. Senjuti Manna, case officer, confirmed that the proposed supermarket would be lower than the height of the residential dwellings. However, the height of the residential houses would be significantly higher than the height of the houses within the existing estate.

Chris Bowring queried how no objection from the environmental health officer was compatible with a refusal reason on the grounds of noise. Senjuti Manna stated that the environmental health officer had reviewed the noise report supplied by the applicant which was assessed during lockdown when there was a significantly reduced volume of traffic. Whilst no objection was lodged, a number of pre-commencement conditions were requested. Taking all of this into account, officers believed that noise disturbance would be caused to neighbouring properties as set out within the officer report.

Angus Ross commented that in his view applications such as this one should always be referred to the Committee to allow the public to see the process being carried out. Angus queried why the economic impact on other retail in the area was not considered a viable reason for refusal, and queried whether a caveat could be placed on the Committee's eventual decision to allow further discussions to take place between Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and the applicant, as the expiry date of the application was 15 December 2021. Senjuti Manna stated that the applicant had provided a sequential test in addition to a retail impact assessment, and based on these documents they had demonstrated that there was no alternative site. Officers queried the reports as there was a site already included in policy CP12, however the applicant stated that this was not part of their catchment. Senjuti commented that there were a number of reasons why the application would not be acceptable in principle, for example development within the countryside, and as such a deferral would not address these in-principle reasons for refusal. Chris Bowring commented that some reasons for refusal, for example highways issues, could be removed should the applicant appeal a refusal decision and those issues were subsequently resolved

Sam Akhtar commented that he would have liked to have seen a biodiversity net gain report for this application. Sam raised concerns relating to noise pollution for local residents and additional risk of serious accidents due to the movement of HGV vehicles.

Bill Soane had concerns in relation to noise and vehicle movements, and HGV movements, and questioned whether delivery timings could be conditioned should the Committee be minded to approve the application. Bill added that in his experience, refrigeration equipment was quiet when new however grew increasingly loud as the equipment aged.

Pauline Jorgensen stated that the site was a clear continuation of a green band along the peripheral road, and many of the houses proposed would be situated very close to the main road with a minimal gap. The main road was often noisy with people racing on it, whilst the road was also used as a primary diversion route when the M4 was closed which only make the noise impact on the proposed houses worse. Pauline stated that she had huge sympathy for residents who purchased a property with a large area of open space designated as countryside, who were now facing the prospect of a large supermarket being situated next to them, which would pull a lot of traffic and vehicle movements from outside of the Earley area.

Carl Doran commented that other such major applications recommended for refusal with a large amount of objections should come to Committee in future. Carl queried why this portion of land had not been transferred to WBC as per the original agreement of the Lower Earley development. Senjuti Manna stated that officers had investigated this issue and whilst not being able to ascertain the specifics, the land had not been handed to WBC in time and time had now run out to enforce this. Senjuti commented that this application had come to Committee as it had been listed by the Assistant Director for Place, whilst the application was brought to the attention of the Chairman given the considerable amount of objections and support.

Carl Doran commented that the application had seen a lot of support outside of the Earley area, whilst the leaflet distributed by the applicant only offered the opportunity to show support for provision of a new supermarket. Carl added that the habitat survey had been carried out after some of the area was felled, and in his opinion there was no essential

need for a food store. Carl stated that the site was part of a green corridor, and approval of this application would set a dangerous precedent for development on other parts of the green corridor, whilst at least four of the refusal reasons would not be able to be overcome via negotiations, as they were strictly contrary to policy.

Pauline Jorgensen queried when the opportunity to enforce the transfer of the land elapsed, and queried why highways issues had not been resolved despite having around a year to negotiate. Senjuti Manna stated that the opportunity to enforce the transfer ended around 1999. Senjuti added that other options, or example an injunction, were possible and were being explored by officers. Chris Easton, Head of Transport, Drainage and Compliance, stated that some of the highways information had only arrived two days prior to the Committee meeting and left officers with no time to thoroughly review the information. Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management, stated that the officer recommendation of refusal would likely remain irrespective of the highways issues being resolved due to the in-principle reasons for refusal remaining.

RESOLVED That application number 211686 be refused for the reasons set out in agenda pages 45 to 47.

Andrew Mickleburgh re-joined the meeting.

60. APPLICATION NO.211777 - TOUTLEY EAST, LAND ADJACENT TOUTLEY DEPOT, WEST OF TWYFORD ROAD

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

61. APPLICATION NO.203544 - LAND TO THE WEST OF ST ANNES DRIVE AND SOUTH OF LONDON ROAD

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 54 units (including 19 affordable homes) with associated access road from St Anne's Drive, landscaping and open space.

Applicant: Beaulieu Homes

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 159 to 242.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda included:

- Confirmation that a response of no objection had been received from Natural England;
- Amended final paragraph on agenda page 159;
- Insertion of approved plans related to condition 2;
- Insertion of plan related to condition 19;
- Insertion of plan related to condition 20;
- Clarification that agenda page 209 paragraph 63 should refer to "*Open Space Typology Plan*";
- Additional condition 40 in relation to access.

David Stack, neighbour, spoke in objection of the application. David stated that he was speaking on behalf of local residents, and this planning application had been started over 6 years ago, with previous versions being refused and appealed by the developer and eventually withdrawn on the strength of the Council's recommendation. David added that this application had generated over 300 objections online from local residents. David

stated that there were four main reasons for refusing this application, and noted that application 211686 had been refused by the Committee for the same reasons. David added that the application site currently sat within designated countryside, and core strategy CP11 stated that proposals outside of development limits, including within countryside, would not be permitted unless one of the exceptions applied, which David felt that it did not in this case. David stated that the settlement boundary sat outside of the current settlement boundary of Wokingham and failed to demonstrate how it would maintain the separation between Wokingham and Bracknell to prevent harm to the visual amenity of the local area, whilst being contrary to policy CP21 and the South Wokingham strategic development plan. David commented that the strategic development plan clearly showed that the site was not allocated for development and was not part of the South Wokingham SDL plans for housing, and was identified to be open green space to contribute to the settlement separation between Bracknell and Wokingham, and approval of this application would therefore be contrary to the strategic plan. David stated that as of 31 March 2020 Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) was able to demonstrate a 5.23 year housing land supply, whilst three large scale developments had been identified within the Local Plan Update, and as such WBC did not need to approve further small scale developments such as this one, which was contrary to a number of policies and plans.

Kay Collins, agent, spoke in support of the application. Kay stated that the applicant had engaged in positive discussions with WBC officers to make changes to the proposed scheme with a number of positive benefits. Kay added that the proposals were well contained with a good buffer and would not lead to the coalescence of Wokingham and Bracknell. Kay stated that it was a well planned development of 54 dwellings set within a series of areas of linked open spaces, with access and junctions approved by officers having also passed a road safety audit. Kay added that the layout had been significantly amended to achieve an improved relationship with the A329 and residential development to the north, whilst there were more substantial open space areas towards the north and frontage to enable further mitigation and integration with the surrounding landscape. Kay stated that walking and cycle routes were provided to the wider area within the development, which had been missing until now. Kay commented that the development was of a significantly lower density than those of the surrounding sites, with 16 dwellings per hectare compared to an assumed density within the SDL of between 25 and 30 dwellings per hectare. Kay stated that the majority of the proposed dwellings would have between 3 and 4 bedrooms, which was in keeping with the rural interface character area, whilst the affordable housing provision would provide much needed affordable properties with some of the homes being 2 bedrooms to reflect the local need. Kay commented that the site would enable increased connectivity from both Montague Park and allowing better access to the development overall. Kay stated that the development was sustainable, with a number of facilities including primary schools, retail, allotments, a public house and bus stops all within walking distance. The development would provide an overall net gain of trees across the site whilst providing a ten percent biodiversity net gain. Kay added that the site would provide a higher number of electric charging points that was required, whilst the proposals would generate significant levels of CIL and S106 contributions.

Peter Dennis, Ward Member, spoke in objection of the application. Peter was of the opinion that this application should be rejected as the previous version had also been rejected. Peter stated that the proposals sat outside of the Local Planning Document and were situated in an area of open green space. Peter added that the previous application discussed on the evening had been refused for the same reasons that this application, in his opinion, should be refused upon. Peter felt that the presumed use of the already heavily used SANGs, and the destruction of TPOd hedges to provide access to the site

was dubious at best. Peter added that use of the existing SANGs would require users to cross a 6 lane main road, which would deter many users. Peter stated that the previous application was refused in part due to a lack of SANG provision, and the site was a gateway entrance to Wokingham providing a good green view into town, and the removal of many trees to provide access to the site would destroy this view. Peter suggested that the site could instead be allowed to re-wild to help meet WBC's aspiration to become a tree city of the world. Peter stated that the site was rich in wildlife, including deer and slowworms, which would be pressured via the proposed development. Peter added that the sustainable plan would provide money to My Journey, which did not build sustainable travel infrastructure, and to build a pathway into the SANG allocated to Montague Park. Peter added that cars trying to access the site would have to drive out of Wokingham to the A329m and turn back, adding to the merging of Wokingham and Bracknell. Peter concluded by stating that this application was situated in an open green space, outside of the settlement boundary, which would lead to a lack of separation between Wokingham and Bracknell whilst causing parking issues, and residents needed to see WBC acting in the interest of residents by refusing this application.

Carl Doran queried how this application differentiated from its previous iteration and how the previous reasons for refusal could have been overcome, queried what consultation had been carried out, sought clarity regarding the expected number of homes to be delivered within the SDL, and queried whether the proposal was encroaching on the settlement separation gap. Joanna Carter, case officer, stated that the overall number of proposed houses had been reduced whilst an improved infrastructure contribution had now been secured. In addition, the provision of local SANGs would mitigate the impact on the Thames Basin Heath. Garden and amenity space had also been improved, including outside space for owners of apartments. The previous scheme was of greater density, and the newly secured SANG was considered on balance to provide an acceptable buffer between Wokingham and Bracknell. With regards to consultation, Joanna stated that consultation with neighbouring properties had been carried out, however the separate community involvement exercise was outside of this process. Excluding this development, the SDL was expected to deliver approximately 2450 homes. Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Planning and Delivery, stated that the previous scheme was inferior to this scheme, and the SANG to the south of the site was not secured at the time of application, whereas now it was. As the SANG was secured, the application site was no longer required as open space for the South Wokingham SDL, and officers considered that the separation gap between Wokingham and Bracknell would be maintained.

Rebecca Margetts sought clarity as to how the site would be accessed from the main road. Chris Easton, Head of Transport, Drainage, and Compliance, stated that the only way to access the site was to enter from the Coppid Beech roundabout and turn left into the site.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether any dangerous manoeuvres could be attempted to access the site via a right turn. Chris Easton stated that a full central island was present outside of the site which would prevent access to the site via a right turn.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether garages and car ports were required to be retained for parking rather than for accommodation, and queried who was responsible for the proposed car parking management strategy and what recourse was available to residents should this not be sufficient. Chris Easton confirmed that all houses would be provided with two car parking spaces and each flat would have one allocated space in addition to a number of unallocated spaces, with some houses having garages in addition to the two car parking spaces with the garages having their permitted development right of conversion to

accommodation removed via condition 38. In relation to the parking management strategy, this was there to help manage the car parking on the site. The site may not be adopted by WBC, in which case it would be up to a management company to manage the site, which conformed to WBC parking standards.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried the rationale behind not undertaking any air quality impact monitoring prior to development, queried why the Bracknell Forest SANG was not considered suitable previously, and queried if there were other alternative sites which supported the underlying policy objectives. Joanna Carter stated that the environmental health officer found it acceptable to secure the air quality assessment as a condition at a later stage. In addition, this site was located in a similar location to the Keephatch development, which would be subject to very similar air quality levels. Joanna stated that there was no requirement for a SANG to be adjacent or in a very close proximity to a site, and Natural England had raised no objection subject to agreement from WBC and Bracknell Forest Council who owned the SANG, which had now been agreed, and as such that original reason for refusal no longer applied. Connor Corrigan stated that the SDL plans had allocated land outside of the settlement boundary within the countryside. These sites were considered acceptable as infrastructure came with development, and this was a key difference between sites within an SDL and a windfall site within the countryside.

Gary Cowan was of the opinion that the purpose of an SDL defining an area for development was failing as these defined areas were creeping out under the justification of a nearby SDL. Gary felt that officers should monitor the tree planting strategy at development sites, as large numbers of newly planted trees were not surviving. Gary queried how many trees were being removed, what grade they were, and what they were being replaced by. Joanna Carter stated that 35 trees were proposed to be felled, 19 trees within the north east corner of the site. Alternative access solutions for access were not possible on highways safety grounds. The majority of the trees proposed to be felled were of low value, whilst 3 TPO trees at the access and 7 TPO trees in total were proposed to be felled. Joanna added that only trees with a low or moderate value were proposed to be removed.

Gary Cowan was of the opinion that the application should be refused as it would result in development within designated countryside whilst not satisfying the criteria set out under the Core Strategy.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried how far away a SANG could be to satisfy its purpose, raised concern that some green land was protected whilst others were not, and noted that at a SANG in Winnersh had a very large percentage of the newly planted trees had not survived. Connor Corrigan stated that Natural England allowed SANGs to be situated around 4km to 5km from a site with car parking provision, so long as it was within a reasonable walking distance.

Bill Soane queried whether a signalised right turn in to the proposed site would be possible. Chris Easton clarified that this would not be possible based on the layout and specification of the North Wokingham Distributor Road.

In response to a variety of points from Members, Connor Corrigan stated that the principle of development was accepted for this site as it was located within the wider SDL. Connor added that the land that now had permission for a SANG was previously just a field. The South Wokingham, south of the railway development, relied on that area of SANG to facilitate its development, and as such that area of SANG would remain as green space.

Connor stated that the Committee needed to resolve whether the separation gap proposed by officers was wide enough to maintain the clear separation of Wokingham and Bracknell.

Gary Cowan proposed that the application be refused on the grounds that the development failed to demonstrate how it would maintain the separation between Wokingham and Bracknell and prevent harm to the visual amenities of the local area, which was contrary to Core Strategy 21 and the South Wokingham SPD, and would result in the loss of trees which were subject to tree preservation orders (TPOs). This proposal was seconded by Carl Doran, and upon being put to the vote the motion to refuse the application was carried.

RESOLVED That application number 203544 be refused, on the grounds that the development failed to demonstrate how it would maintain the separation between Wokingham and Bracknell and prevent harm to the visual amenities of the local area, which was contrary to Core Strategy 21 and the South Wokingham SPD, and would result in the loss of trees which were subject to tree preservation orders (TPOs).

62. APPLICATION NO.211975 - NUTBEAN FARM, NUTBEAN LANE, SWALLOWFIELD

Proposal: Full application for the proposed change of use of land from agricultural to equestrian plus erection of 2 no. stable buildings with associated hardstanding, the creation of a manège and extended vehicular access (part retrospective).

Applicant: Mr Jem Dance

The Committee consider a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 243 to 268.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda included:

- Additional condition 9 relating to landscaping, and officer comment;
- Confirmation that a consultation response had been received from Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) Ecology with a recommendation of approval subject to conditions;
- Updated comments from the WBC Ecology officer, and associated officer response.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether specific permission could be applied to the applicant in relation to commercial activity. Natalie Jarman, case officer, stated that condition 4 restricted commercial activity, and should the applicant wish to remove this condition they would be required to apply to remove that condition and consideration would have to be made at that time.

RESOLVED That application number 211975 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 244 to 247, and additional condition 9 as set out within the Supplementary Planning Agenda.