

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 11 MAY 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.59 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Chris Bowring (Chairman), Sam Akhtar, Stephen Conway, Gary Cowan, Pauline Jorgensen, Rebecca Margetts, Andrew Mickleburgh, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey and Bill Soane

Councillors Present and Speaking

Councillors: Rachel Bishop-Firth, Shirley Boyt and Morag Malvern

Officers Present

Emma Choules, Environmental Health officer
Brian Conlon, Operational Lead - Development Management
Connor Corrigan, Service Manager - Planning and Delivery
Chris Easton, Head of Transport, Drainage and Compliance
Sean O'Connor, Head of Legal Services
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

Case Officers Present

Stefan Fludger
James Fuller
Adriana Gonzalez
Christopher Howard
Sophie Morris
Graham Vaughan

94. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Chris Bowring and seconded by Pauline Jorgensen that Bill Soane be elected as vice-Chairman for the remainder of the municipal year.

RESOLVED That Bill Soane be appointed vice-Chairman for the remainder of the municipal year.

95. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

The Committee thanked Angus Ross, who had recently stood down from the Council, for his long period of service on the Council and the Planning Committee. The Committee remarked on Angus' experience, knowledge and understanding of the Planning process, and wished to pass on their thanks and best wishes.

96. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 April 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

97. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Sam Akhtar declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 102, application 220654, on the grounds that he was the Ward Member for the area and had made comments with regards to the application and had helped to mediate between interested parties. Sam added that he would leave the room for the duration of the Committee's debate and subsequent vote.

Stephen Conway made comment with regard to agenda item 105, application number 220571. Stephen stated that this application was as a result of discussions involving himself to address the need to expand the intake of Wargrave Piggott school. Stephen added that his involvement in these discussions occurred at a fairly early stage of the process, and he would participate in the debate and the vote on this item.

98. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

No applications were recommended for deferral, or withdrawn.

99. APPLICATION NO.212717 - DOBBIES GARDEN CENTRE, 166 HYDE END ROAD, SHINFIELD

Proposal: Full planning application for redevelopment of the site to provide a new garden centre retail development incorporating restaurant/cafe, food hall and veterinary practice with ancillary works including car parking, access, outdoor display areas and landscaping, following demolition of existing buildings.

Applicant: Dobbies Garden Centres Limited

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 11 to 66.

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

- Additional condition 39 in relation to gates and security measures;
- Update to Shinfield Parish Council's response to state that they were in favour of the proposed development as it would provide services to the parish.

Andrew Horrix, applicant, spoke in support of the application. Andrew stated that the garden centre had been purchased in 2006 and had grown to be a key part of the company's estate over the last 16 years, with a strong customer base and strong ties to the local community. This scheme was first looked at in 2018 with a view to invest in the garden centre to give it a longer lease of life and a secure future for years to come. There was a fantastic team of staff that delivered customer services given the constraints of the site, which only offered an outdoor toilet whilst much of the site was single glazed. Additional technologies such as renewable infrastructure could not be incorporated with the current build. Andrew stated that the proposals would provide for shoppers and the local community, with a free community room available to book for events, a learning centre for children including access to seedlings, and provision of a more inclusive space with disabled parking being located closer to the entrance with additional improved accessibility. A thorough range of consultations had been undertaken including one to one sessions with neighbours which had resulted in modifications to the proposals. Andrew concluded by stating that the proposals would provide a store for the future which would continue to serve the community for years to come.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried whether additional passive electric vehicle charging points could be installed on the site for activation at a later date. Christopher Howard, case officer, stated that the current proposals complied with standards, and the store could look into additional electric vehicle charging points in the future. Chris Easton, Head of Transport, Drainage and Compliance, stated that 18 active and 18 passive electric vehicle charging points were being provided, and should building regulations change in the future

then the applicant would be required to comply. Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey proposed an additional informative, encouraging the applicant to install additional passive electric vehicle charging infrastructure. This proposal was seconded, carried, and added to the list of informatives.

Sam Akhtar queried what level of additional employment would be generated by the proposals. Christopher Howard confirmed that 12 additional jobs would be created whilst the existing 26 jobs would be retained.

Bill Soane queried whether there would be a phased closure and opening of the site during the construction period. Christopher Howard stated that the front of the existing building could stay open during most of the construction period, whilst a short period of 'decanting' from the existing building to the new building would be required towards the end of the construction period.

Stephen Conway commented that the application appeared to be a good improvement on the current building whilst causing no obvious harm or attracting any objections. Stephen added that he was minded to approve the application.

Gary Cowan echoed comments made by Stephen Conway. Gary asked that it be minuted that should funding become available Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) look to improve the section of the highway outside of the application site once the University of Reading gave over that section of the land. Gary queried what accessible car parking spaces referred to, and sought details with regards to the emergency plans for both the construction and post occupation phases of development. Chris Easton confirmed that accessible spaces referred to disabled spaces. Christopher Howard stated that there were two conditions relating to emergency planning, whilst the emergency planning team at WBC and West Berkshire Council had been consulted. Both emergency planning teams were supportive of the proposals subject to conditions.

Gary Cowan stated that there was a tendency for vehicles exiting the site to go across the centre of the access which made it difficult for vehicles to enter the site. Christopher Howard confirmed that access to the site would be much improved as a result of this application, with much improved sight lines and the introduction of the right-hand turn box would in effect widen the road into three lanes. Chris Easton confirmed that a stage one road safety audit had been carried out, whilst the applicant would be required to meet highways design guide standards. Chris added that the sight lines would be much improved as a result of the proposals.

Pauline Jorgensen stated that she was very much in support of the application, which was comprehensive and had attracted no objections.

Andrew Mickleburgh commented that the application had many merits which would have a positive impact on the countryside via the repositioning and consolidation of the existing building. Andrew added that the list of conditions was comprehensive, and stated that he was minded to support the application.

RESOLVED That application number 212717 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 12 to 29, additional condition 39 relating to security measures as contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda, and additional informative encouraging the provision of additional passive electric vehicle charging infrastructure as resolved by the Committee, subject to legal agreement.

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

Proposal: Outline application for up to 130 residential units and a 70 bed care home (all matters reserved except access to the site).

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 67 to 126.

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

- Amended condition 45;
- Correction to the approved plan referenced within condition 47;
- Plan provided by the applicant showing projected flood levels, which had been accepted by the Environment Agency;
- Correction that the scheme would be for up to 130 residential units rather than 120 as stated within the report.

The Committee were advised that additional condition 48 was also proposed, in relation to speed limits and speed reduction.

Imogen Shepherd-Dubey, Wokingham Town Council, spoke in objection to the proposal. Imogen stated that this application had caused significant concern, with a large number of objections received from residents. Imogen added that road safety was a major concern, with vehicles on the bridge travelling along the road at 60MPH not seeing the single exit from the site until they were close by, whilst the road was one step below the desired visibility standard for a 50MPH road. Imogen stated that the pavement was only located on one side of the road, and felt that the proposed emergency exit needed to be available at all times or be made into a proper exit. Imogen stated that part of the site was located in a flood zone, and noted that the Environment Agency report had stated that the site was not suitable for such a development. Imogen added that there was no nearby public transport available, whilst the noise assessment had been carried out in August which was when noise levels were typically at their lowest and were not a fair representation. Imogen concluded by stating that a variety of Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) core policies had not been met including CP1, CP2, CP3, CP4 and CP6, and urged the Committee to refuse the application.

Phil Cunnington, on behalf of the applicant, spoke in support of the application. Phil stated that the site had been earmarked for development for quite some time, and had been included within the North Wokingham SDL when the core strategy was adopted back in 2010, and had been expressly promoted for housing under the recent Local Plan Update (LPU). Phil thanked planning officers for working proactively to get the proposals to a level whereby they could be recommended for approval. The proposals included residential units which would accommodate affordable housing to help meet the projected housing demand for the Borough within a sustainable location with good access to facilities and the Wokingham town centre. Phil stated that opportunities would be explored to reduce the development's carbon footprint in accordance with WBC's climate emergency declaration in addition to improving biodiversity, providing high quality open spaces and promoting job opportunities for local people within the construction phases. Phil added that the site would

also deliver a new dementia care home, which was a key priority for the Council given the key long-term trend for the area indicated that more older people would require dementia and residential care going forwards. Phil added that care costs were predicted to rise by up to twenty percent over the next few years, whilst social care reforms would leave WBC with increased costs as yet to be specified. Phil stated that purpose-built facilities would enable some of the costs of high quality dementia care to be mitigated, and to ensure capacity for future occupants. Phil added that the existing Suffolk Lodge facility struggled to meet the needs of all potential residents, and could not meet nursing care needs. The new larger facility would be a more flexible and purposed designed 68-bedroom facility which would be designed to support personalised care, enable residents to live healthy lives, provide better value than current care arrangements, and provide an enhanced in-Borough service provision for residents. Phil stated that he was confident that the outline proposals provided the framework for the delivery of high-quality design which would be considered in detail at the future reserved matters stage, should the proposal before the Committee be approved. Phil urged the Committee to approve the application.

Morag Malvern, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. Morag stated that a number of local residents were concerned that any access to this site from the A321 would be extremely dangerous, and queried whether any independent safety assessment had been undertaken.

Rachel Bishop-Firth, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. Rachel stated that more social and affordable homes were required within the Borough in addition to care home beds to meet the needs of the aging population, however these homes and care homes must be situated within suitable locations, and Rachel felt that the proposed site was not a suitable location. Rachel felt the proposal was to use a noisy piece of land which was very close to the motorway and an industrial depot to house those who had the least choice over where they lived, those on lower incomes, and those requiring old age care. Rachel stated that for some of the proposed homes, noise could only be kept at acceptable levels if residents had triple glazed windows and kept them shut, whilst the report acknowledged that acceptable noise levels would be breached within some of the gardens. Rachel raised concerns regarding flooding, stating that the Environment Agency were of the opinion that a portion of the site was liable to flooding, but that the applicant had produced an alternative report which showed a reduced risk. Rachel was concerned that information was being relied upon which conflicted with the Environment Agency's advice, and queried whether either assessment had taken into account the possible effects of global warming. Rachel stated that travel into the town centre would take approximately 30 minutes whether travelling on foot or by bus, which would be a significant barrier to many of the care home residents and staff, and those individuals on low incomes. Rachel added that she was concerned with the proposed emergency exit, and queried how it would be opened in an emergency. Rachel voiced concerns that lower income residents and those requiring dementia care were being pushed into an unsuitable site when other uses such as a solar farm should be explored. Rachel urged the Committee to refuse application and for the applicant to explore other possible uses for the site.

Chris Bowring queried a number of points raised by public speakers. Chris sought additional details relating to the proposed emergency access, queried whether the housing would be located within flood zone two or three, sought clarity with regards to the Environment Agency's comments, and queried where the nearest bus stop was in relation to the application site. Chris Easton, Head of Transport, Drainage, and Compliance, stated that new condition 48 in addition to the speed survey carried out by the applicant and a first stage road safety audit broadly met the visual splay requirements. The speed survey

was carried out during lockdown, however there was a general trend of higher speeds during this period. The survey identified an average speed limit of approximately 40MPH, with an 85th percentile at 51MPH, and assessments were requested to be considered to move the 40MPH sign closer to the bridge. Chris stated that the emergency access would be via the depot land with a dropped bollard which could be accessed by a coded lock for use by emergency services. A pedestrian walking and cycle route would be secured via S106 prior to the development being occupied, which would lead to the south through the Matthewsgreen and on to Queen's Road. Chris noted that the nearest bus stop was located on Queen's Road, approximately 200m from the application site. Stefan Fludger, case officer, stated that officers had negotiated with the Environment Agency regarding the additional information submitted by the applicant, and the applicant had demonstrated that the water would remain within the existing watercourses during times of flood, and the Environment Agency had accepted the submission subject to additional investigation of the existing culvert at the access point and further additional detail at the reserved matters stage. In relation to noise, Stefan stated that the environmental health officer had raised this as a point, however this had to be considered in the context that the proposal was only an indicative scheme. Some areas on the indicative scheme would exceed recommended guidelines, for example the upper floors of some dwellings and a number of other properties. Officers had assessed the outline scheme in detail, and it was considered by the environmental health officer that these issues could be dealt with at the reserved matters stage, and the application was for up to 130 dwellings and a 70-bed care home and could be amended as appropriate, for example adjusting the noise bund or re-assessing the layout of the site. Community facilities were located approximately 150m away over the new pedestrian bridge in the form of the new community centre and a local school. Stefan confirmed that affordable housing was in accordance with policy.

Pauline Jorgensen felt that the site appeared to be isolated, and queried how the access to the left worked. In addition, Pauline felt that a site visit might be useful to assess surroundings of the site and to understand how the access would work. Connor Corrigan, Service Manager - Planning and Delivery, stated that a pedestrian and cycle link would be installed into the neighbouring development once the site was built out. Connor added that the site was closer to a lot of amenities and facilities than many other sites, whilst access would be available off of the Twyford Road. Condition 40 was secured to ensure management of the access via the depot if it was ever required.

Gary Cowan was of the opinion that the site was not a suitable location for residential development or a care home, and should continue to be allocated for employment use. Gary commented that the Green Park employment site was located within similar surroundings, and was a fine example of a modern and thriving employment site. Gary stated that this application would lead to 130 dwellings and a 70-bed care home being located in a noisy area where residents could not open their windows else noise levels would become even worse. Gary noted that many consultation responses were missing from the report, and reiterated his view that the site was inappropriate for residential development and was instead a perfect employment site. Connor Corrigan stated that the application was for outline planning permission which would agree the principle of development. Noise bunds and fencing could be installed and repositioned in order to make noise levels acceptable, whilst alterations could be made to the layout of the site. Connor added that the employment needs of the Borough had changed markedly since the site allocation in 2010 for employment use, and the site could potentially become a 'bad neighbour' positioned next to a school and residential properties to the south. Connor stated that there had been no interest from retailers, though this was not a planning consideration. Connor noted that the Environment Agency were now satisfied that the

scheme could now go ahead subject to further detail, and it was very regular for consultees such as South East Water to wait for outline planning permission prior to making comment. Gary Cowan stated that Green Park was an excellent example of an employment site being a good neighbour, with a fantastic residential development in the middle of the site. Gary was of the opinion that houses next to the Toutley Depot would be a far worse scenario, and residents would not be able to open their windows and would have to live with a 1.8m high noise bund. Gary commented that once the principle of development was established via outline planning permission, residential dwellings and a care home would be developed on what Gary felt was a wholly inappropriate site for such a development.

Sam Akhtar was of the opinion that a site visit would be useful for the Committee to better understand the context of the site. Sam stated that he appreciated the idea of more one-bedroom housing and studio flats to help first time buyers.

Stephen Conway stated that approval of the outline application would approve the principle of development for a 70-bed care home and up to 130 dwellings, which the access would have to account for. Stephen noted that more social housing and residential care would be provided, but queried whether this would be the correct location. Stephen added that this site sat on the edge of a development location, and the Committee would be required to take on faith that a reduction in houses would occur to accommodate noise reduction measures. Stephen added that the Environment Agency would require further details regarding flooding, and the Environment Agency had also raised concerns regarding a number of sites suggested within the Local Plan Update. Stephen sought clarity regarding the speed limit on the stretch of the Twyford Road. Chris Easton stated that just south of the proposed access to the site the speed limit changed from 40MPH to the national speed limit. A condition had been added which required additional information, whilst speed surveys had been carried out for that section of the road and visual splays could be provided at a later stage. Stephen commented that he was very against any development going ahead prior to the entire section of the road being limited to 40MPH.

Stephen Conway stated that it may be very tempting for residents to turn left onto the Twyford Road in order to catch the train services from Twyford station, which would cause considerable congestion. Stephen queried whether a regular bus could be provided from the proposed site to Twyford station. Chris Easton stated that the trip distribution from this site travelling northbound in the AM peak would be approximately 23 vehicles. The North Wokingham bus strategy was being worked up and funded by all major developments in the area, including this one, whilst the Coppid Beech park and ride may be attractive to residents who wished to commute into London.

Stefan Fludger clarified that the response from the Environment Agency should read no objection, as they had withdrawn their original objection to the scheme.

Andrew Mickleburgh was of the opinion that if outline planning permission was granted then a development of this nature would almost certainly come forwards. Andrew queried whether there was any statutory guidance for care homes located near motorways, queried whether there any specific standards for care homes in terms of amenity space or air quality, queried whether the three-storey height of the care home could possibly exacerbate any problems given its close proximity to the motorway, and queried whether Adult's Services could be one of the consultees. Stefan Fludger confirmed that officers were not aware of any statutory guidance in relation to care homes and their proximity to motorways, and officers were reliant on the guidance of the environmental health officer

who had not raised any objection. Connor Corrigan stated that there was no statutory obligation to consult Adult's Services, however as the outline plans included a care home this was indicative of the numerous conversations that would have taken place internally with Adult's Services. Connor stated that the higher a property was the more noise that it could experience as noise would deflect upwards from any noise bund. Should the development progress to the reserved matters stage, the height of the care home could be reduced, and the footprint increased or the height of the noise bund could be increased to mitigate the impact of noise.

Andrew Mickleburgh commented that he wished for Adult's Services to be more formally included and recognised within the consultation process. Andrew queried what might be some of the potential adverse consequences of phasing the development, sought clarity with regards to the definition of built form, and queried whether any mitigating measures could be implemented with regards to overshadowing and overlooking concerns. Connor Corrigan stated that the applicant needed to consider how the site was going to be phased, and this would be considered at any future reserved matters stage. Stefan Fludger confirmed that built form of the site included the green spaces and drainage basin. Connor Corrigan confirmed that officers had noted the issue of overlooking within the report as it was clear from looking at the indicative layout that issues would occur. Layout and design would be considered in detail should this development progress to the reserved matters stage.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey was of the opinion that it was wrong to place affordable housing and a care home in a location that was unwanted for employment use, and was an inappropriate location for residential development. Rachelle stated that drivers often drove over and above the speed limits on this particular stretch of road. Rachelle queried whether residents of the care home would be expected to cycle to the town centre, queried where the funding would come from to fund a bus service to Twyford, raised concerns in relation to adequate provision of public transport services for care home staff, commented that the Coppid Beech Park and Ride was not a well-used service, and felt that a site visit was necessary to better understand the context of the site. Connor Corrigan stated that this development would be closer to facilities than the development at Keephatch which also included affordable housing provision. Connor added that a bus route was planned for the area however it was not yet implemented. Connor commented that the Environment Agency had assessed the site and in essence felt that the site could accommodate such a development however additional details with regards to engineering were required. Chris Easton stated that the Coppid Beech park and ride had only opened in the past few weeks, and needed time to bed in and settle down. With regards to bus route funding, a combination of developer contributions, partnership working and S106 contributions would be explored to look at delivery of routes.

Rebecca Margetts stated that she had a background in nursing, and voiced concerns with regards to how a large number of care home staff would be able to access the site, especially as many of the staff may not have access to a private vehicle. Rebecca commented that the scale of the care home and its proposed location was a major concern. Connor Corrigan stated that how staff would get to and from the site would be a decision for the operator, and in planning terms officers felt that the site could accommodate such a development. A bus service was planned for the future, and officers deemed the site as acceptable and close by to facilities.

Gary Cowan commented that as the lead local flood authority Wokingham Borough Council should have flood maps and should be able to assess the application based on

these detailed plans. Gary added that Members of the Committee had raised serious reservations with regards to this application, and felt that the application should be refused.

Pauline Jorgensen proposed to defer the application to enable a site visit to be undertaken to allow the Committee to assess the positioning of the motorway in relation to the site, the access to the site and the perceived isolation of the site, and to assess the impact of noise. This proposal was seconded by Stephen Conway and upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

RESOLVED That application number 211777 be deferred to enable a site visit to be undertaken to allow the Committee to assess the positioning of the motorway in relation to the site, the access to the site and the perceived isolation of the site, and to assess the impact of noise.

101. APPLICATION NO.213106 - HEADLEY PARK, HEADLEY ROAD EAST, WOODLEY

Proposal: Full planning application for the proposed erection of 5 no. buildings for commercial development to provide flexible light industrial, general industrial, and storage and distribution uses, with ancillary offices, associated car parking, formation of new accesses, and landscape planting, following demolition of existing buildings.

Applicant: HE2 Reading 1 GP Limited

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 127 to 196.

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

- Additional clarification regarding a potential calculation of employment opportunities created by the proposed development, and clarification that the scheme was in accordance with planning policy regarding economic development;
- Clarification that the set back of the proposed development from the boundary would ensure the angle of view would not be significantly altered;
- Reference to additional comment received after the publication of the agenda with regards to preservation of the building on the site due to its history.

Keith Baker, Woodley Town Council, spoke in objection to the application. Keith stated that Woodley Town Council's Planning Committee had considered this application and had recommended refusal for a number of reasons. Keith stated that the current plans reflected parking provision for up to 28 articulated lorries, which was simply not appropriate and would overwhelm the highways infrastructure surrounding the site. Keith added that Viscount Way was not suitable for large volumes of traffic due to its width and proximity to a large number of residential properties. Keith stated that additional HGVs had been granted permission to the area recently as a result of an application from another company, whilst noting that this application would further add to this problem. Keith felt that the situation would be unsustainable on Viscount Way should this application be approved. Residents were also concerned that the additional noise and air pollution generated by this development would have a detrimental impact. Woodley Town Council's Planning Committee noted that the Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework, CP1, advised that planning permission would be granted for development proposals that

avoid areas where pollution including noise would impact on the amenity of future occupiers. Keith felt that the proposed building to the east of the site would be overbearing due to its height and massing to those neighbouring properties on Gemini Road, whilst operations taking place outside of regular business hours would be detrimental to residents on neighbouring streets.

Kai Meade, neighbour, spoke in objection to the application. Kai stated that the traffic assessment report provided by the developer did not consider any HGV movements within the report, whilst being incorrectly calculated and was a reason for refusal. The results of air quality testing within the surrounding area between November and January last year indicated that air quality levels were already breaching the WHO levels of what was considered safe, whilst the report added that further testing would be required within the summer months whereby pollution levels would be at least sixty-percent higher. Kai stated that residents were already suffering immensely due to existing haulage businesses which were creating pollution, affecting the health of residents and the development of local children's lungs. Kai added that Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) planning and environmental health officers were acutely aware of the damaging situation on residents health, with a noise report, medical records and various dust analysis having been submitted. Kai was of the opinion that residents of the Redrow and Baker's Place developments would be condemned to the same extreme health damaging pollution as experienced by other residents, and Kai urged the Committee to refuse the application.

Julian Temple, resident, spoke in objection to the application. Julian commented that he was the author of 'Wings over Woodley', and felt that the former Miles Aircraft Headquarters was important to the local community and to aviation history. An online petition to save this local landmark had attracted over 4,500 signatures, whilst polls on local social media had seen most responses favouring retention of the building. The building had been subject to three separate listing requests to Historic England, and whilst the building had not met the required criteria this did not mean that it was unimportant. Julian stated that a built heritage statement was submitted by the applicant when requested by the WBC conservation officer and promoted by Councillor Boyt, however Julian was of the opinion that this report was woefully inadequate and he had uploaded a four-page review of his own which he would have expected the conservation officer to review both documents, visit the site and produce a revised report to the planning officer. Julian added that there was no sound reason as to why the architecturally distinguished headquarters could not be repurposed as part of the site's redevelopment. Julian queried whether all options for conserving the site had been fully explored.

Tai Shopido, resident, spoke in objection to the application. Tai wished to give a healthcare professional and ex-Berkshire Commissioner perspective of the application. Tai stated that there was a growing prevalence of COPD and other cardiovascular conditions across the Borough in addition to the growing number of hospital conditions in relation to these conditions. Tai stated that he had not opened his windows for 6 years due to pollution in the area. Tai referenced the chaos caused by large numbers of HGVs already present in the area, and urged the Committee to refuse the application.

Andy Ryley, on behalf of the applicant, spoke in support of the application. Andy stated that the scheme would redevelop a brown field site as strongly encouraged by WBC policies. Key benefits would be provided including a modern and energy efficient commercial building, an increase of between 70 and 180 new jobs, approximately 2700m² additional commercial floor space, a significantly increased separation distance of 7.5m to residential properties on the eastern side of the site, reduced noise from the current use as

a result of improved design and reorientation of buildings, improved access on to Headley Road East and dedicated onsite parking which had been accepted by highways officers, significantly improved soft landscaping across the site including across the eastern boundary of the site with substantial amounts of new tree plantings as agreed with the landscape officer, new wildlife habitats including native planting and nesting boxes, and a contribution to WBC's employment skills programme. Andy added that the site was not locally or statutory listed nor was it within the conservation area, whilst the remainder of the aircraft site had been redeveloped over time into residential and industrial use, and no suggestion had been made for these surrounding developments that there was any heritage significance to be considered. Andy stated that the building conservation officer had no objection on heritage ground for this site, whilst Historic England had carefully considered the site and had concluded that the building was not worthy of statutory listing, however photographic documentation would be required. Andy confirmed that WBC highways officer had demonstrated no adverse highways impact as a result of the proposals, and confirmed that the application would confirm to local and national planning policies. Andy urged the Committee to approve the application.

Shirley Boyt, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. Shirley stated that all Bulmershe and Whitegates Ward Members were united against the proposed development. Shirley stated that of the 250 objections to the application 110 were against the demolition of the Miles office building, whilst an online petition seeking to retain and restore the building had received over 4,500 signatures. Shirley felt that the building could be upgraded internally to modern standards and be used for any number of commercial purposes, and voiced disappointment that the applicant had not considered these options and had instead chosen a standardised industrial unit. Shirley asked that the last remaining piece of Woodley's aviation history be retained. Shirley stated that paragraph 185 of the NPPF stated that planning policy and decisions should take into account the cumulative effects of pollution, health, living conditions and the natural environment. Shirley commented that the note to the technical note to the transport assessment stated that the site was not designed to accommodate distribution type activities, and as such this was not considered within forecasting options. Shirley added that the technical note did not make sense when taking into account 20 HGV loading bays were proposed, of which several if not all units could be used for distribution, which would bring additional HGVs and forklift trucks into an area where the health, wellbeing and safety of residents was already seriously compromised from existing haulage operators. Shirley felt that this application should, at the very least, be deferred to await a fresh transport assessment to include a forecast of additional HGV movements. Shirley raised concerns that no detrimental impact was identified in terms of environmental health in the absence of modelling for the number of new HGVs entering the area. Shirley stated that the impact on residential amenity via the bulk and overbearing nature of unit 10 would be significant and had not in her opinion been adequately addressed by the fencing and landscaping proposals. Shirley sought clarity that the new employment opportunities would account for the 160 or more jobs, many of which being skilled engineering jobs, that would be lost from the company currently occupying the site.

Graham Vaughan, case officer, responded to a number of points raised by public speakers. Graham stated that the site currently had no restrictions on the numbers of HGVs or the time when they could arrive and works could commence. Graham added that the use of the site had been in place for some time, and there was no planning permission in place to control that use. Agreement of the proposals would give WBC control over various aspects of the site compared to the current arrangement. Graham commented that the scheme included an access road which would join up Headley Road East and Viscount

Way, which should be more attractive for HGV movements when compared to Gemini Road. Graham stated that a condition was proposed regarding signage, to encourage vehicles to use the vehicular access road rather than via Gemini Road. Chris Easton, Head of Transport, Drainage and Compliance, stated that part of the road to the south was private. As the site was currently unrestricted, granting planning permission would allow an element of control in terms of access and vehicle movements. Chris added that B2 use of the site had been conditioned to 35 percent of the total floor space which would reduce pressure on parking. Graham Vaughan stated that the heritage officer had been consulted and had not objected to the application, whilst Historic England had considered that the site did not warrant listing via their designated listing process. Graham added that the planning system was plan led, whereby policies were in place to determine applications. The NPPF stated that schemes needed to be determined via a balanced judgement process, and for this application that meant balancing the significance of the built structure compared to the benefits of the proposed scheme. It was deemed that the building no longer expressed the original use of the site as the Woodley airfield had been removed to the extent that the building did not read as a part of its surroundings. The officer judgement was that when the benefits of the scheme were weighed up against the significance of the structure, the benefits clearly outweighed the significance in this case.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey was of the opinion that it was wrong for the last piece of the Borough's ties to the Battle of Britain to be removed, and felt that the proposed use of the site was located in the wrong area. Graham Vaughan stated that the site had been designated for such a use under WBC's core management plan.

Andrew Mickleburgh commented that a very significant number of people felt that the site retained significant historic importance. Andrew sought officer comment on reports circulated by Councillor Boyt regarding noise and particulate monitoring with respect of Lilly May Court as to whether the focus on those reports were on the site adjacent and what might be the net impact on residents should this application be approved, sought clarity as to whether the intention of condition 11 was for the majority of access to be via Headley Road East, queried whether access to the new road would be restricted to site users, and queried whether other bodies similar to Historic England might have been consulted with regards to consideration of the value of the building. Graham Vaughan stated that officers acknowledged the ongoing investigations at Lilly May Court, and the Committee needed clear as to what were existing impacts and what impacts might come about as a result of this scheme. Graham added that it was not for this scheme to solve any existing issues, however the scheme needed to ensure that it did not have a detrimental impact in and of itself. Graham stated that officers and consultees were satisfied that the scheme would not have a detrimental impact subject to conditions. Chris Easton confirmed that the proposed new road would be privately owned, and it would be up to the operator to implement remedial action.

Chris Bowring queried whether the existing planning permission placed any restriction on the number of HGVs on the site currently. Graham Vaughan confirmed that the number of number of HGVs on site was currently unrestricted.

Stephen Conway stated that noise and pollution was already a considerable problem in the area, whilst this application would add additional HGV movements and it was reasonable to assume that this could add to the existing issues. Stephen queried whether the lack of official designation as a historical asset meant that the Committee could not place value on the site as an asset of local importance. Graham Vaughan stated that the NPPF gave regard to non-designated heritage assets within the decision making

process, and added that a balanced judgement was required when considering the harm or loss of an asset compared to the benefits of the proposal. Officers had determined that the benefits of this proposal outweighed the significance of the non-designated heritage asset, as the building was no longer within its original context nor surrounded by an airfield. Brian Conlon, Operational Lead – Development Management, stated that the building at present had no statutory or legal protection, and therefore could be converted or renovated subject to conditions. WBC had no control over the site at present, whilst officer had to carefully balance aspects including public opinion, designation, references of value against the benefits of the proposal.

Stephen Conway commented that officers had appeared to make an on-balance judgement based largely around the siting and surroundings. Stephen added that it was clear that the site was of huge significance to many residents, which was only made stronger as the wider site had been removed and redeveloped. Stephen felt it difficult to conclude how the issue regarding HGVs would not be made worse by the approval of this application. Emma Choules, Environmental Health officer, stated that the applicant had submitted an air quality assessment which had been considered against modelling and local and national statutory objectives and targets in England. There was no current national targets or objective value for PM 2.5, whilst the air quality would be managed during the demolition and construction phase via the construction and environmental management plan condition. With regards to noise, the site currently had no restrictions in this capacity. Subject to conditions units 1 to 8 were deemed to produce acceptable levels of noise given the layout of the site, whilst units 9 and 10 would require a noise fence and would not be allowed to accept night-time deliveries. In addition, each unit would be required to produce a noise management plan.

Stephen Conway queried whether the Committee were allowed to consider the cumulative impact of air pollution in the area, which this development would add to. Emma Choules stated that the indications from the adjacent site's investigation had not shown an issue, however additional monitoring would be required. Brian Conlon stated that this was an application for one specific part of a wider site, and the Committee had to consider the standards that must be applied for this site, and then assess how this site could support, mitigate and control itself via conditions. Graham Vaughan stated that it had been demonstrated through the report that this site would have a negligible impact on air quality in the area.

Stephen Conway queried whether the façade of the building could be maintained through redevelopment. Graham Vaughan stated that the Committee was being asked to determine the application in front of them in accordance with local and national planning policies and guidance. Graham added that clear harm would need to be demonstrated in terms of loss of heritage as a reason to refuse the application. Brian Conlon stated that if the design was deemed unacceptable then the Committee would be required to specify why the design was unacceptable or unattractive.

At this point of the meeting, Chris Bowring proposed that the meeting be extended by 30 minutes to a maximum finish time of 11pm. This proposal was seconded and carried.

Pauline Jorgensen stated that aircraft factories were large by design, and she could not accept that retaining the front of the building whilst redeveloping the rear was not deemed to be of value. Pauline felt that a revised scheme which retained the front of the building whilst redeveloping the rear of the building would achieve the goal of provide a modern and purpose-built site whilst retaining the important historical frontage which residents

placed significant value on. Brian Conlon stated that the justification of a façade required demonstration that the frontage was performing a positive historical amenity role. Pauline Jorgensen commented that Woodley had very strong links to its aviation history including many roads named after aircraft, whilst there was a clear demonstration of the value placed on the building from the public in the form of petitions and objections to the building's removal.

Gary Cowan was of the opinion that if the frontage was retained then the heritage would be preserved, and there were many such examples across Berkshire. Gary added that the previous engineering use was not a twenty-four-hour operation, and the 20 HGV loading bays would inevitably lead to additional noise and pollution. Gary stated that he would be in support of a motion to defer the application to allow time to address concerns raised by the Committee. Graham Vaughan stated that this site was a core employment area, and the use of the site was not a change of use but a redesign.

Brian Conlon was requested to provide a form of words, should Members be minded to defer the application. Based on concerns raised by Members, Brian suggested that the debate would appear to indicate deferral of the application in order to allow them to more fully understand the context of the site and to allow a site visit to be undertaken to allow consideration of the heritage aspects of the site and environmental health issues raised.

Bill Soane queried whether the façade of this building could be designated locally as an asset of community value as had other such buildings had been in the area, and raised concern that other operators in their area could lose their operations licence as additional objections could be received as a result of this application.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey clarified that she had not made the comments referred to on agenda page 139.

Gary Cowan proposed that this application be deferred, to allow the Committee to more fully understand the context of the site and to allow a site visit to be undertaken to allow consideration of the heritage aspects of the site and environmental health issues raised. This proposal was seconded by Stephen Conway and upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

RESOLVED That application number 213106 be deferred to allow the Committee to more fully understand the context of the site and to allow a site visit to be undertaken to allow consideration of the heritage aspects of the site and environmental health issues raised.

102. APPLICATION NO.220654 - 14 CHILTERN DRIVE, CHARVIL
Sam Akhtar declared a prejudicial interest in this item.

Proposal: Application to vary condition 2 of application 212989 for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension with 1 no. roof light following demolition of existing conservatory and existing rear extension (part retrospective). Condition 2 refers to the approved plans and the variation is to allow an increase in the height of the roof.
(Retrospective)

Applicant: Mr Hargunus

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 197 to 208.

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

Mike Heath, Charvil Parish Council, spoke in objection to the application. Mike stated that everyone should expect that planning applications would follow the letter and spirit of the law, and it was his opinion that this application did not follow the spirit of the law. Mike stated that there had been a series of 5 planning applications and two retrospective applications had been carried out. Mike felt that the current property would not have been granted approval in its current form due to a variety of failings and mis-designs. Mike stated that a Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) planning enforcement officer had agreed that the property was in breach of their planning permission, which had still not been rectified to date. Mike added that this was the second of two retrospective planning applications, and understood that only one retrospective application should be allowed. Mike stated that this was an issue that concerned residents on a local level, and asked that the application be refused.

Danny Murphy, neighbour, spoke in objection to the application. Danny stated that a thin Perspex roof had been placed over the unauthorised structure in 2016, which was later replaced with felt which he had mistakenly not objected to at the time. In July 2021 the height of the boundary wall was increased with no notification, consent or planning permission. Danny added that the retrospective application included inaccurate drawings which did not show the changes on the western boundary. Danny was of the opinion that enforcement and planning officers knew of these differences however they chose to ignore them and instead approve the incorrect designs. Danny stated that predictive obtrusive angles of the roof structure were visible from the street. Danny felt that retrospective application upon retrospective application should not be considered in accordance with local planning enforcement guidance. Danny stated that his garden was very small, and any increase to the height of the neighbouring wall had a real and evidenced detrimental impact on his and his family's amenity. Danny queried how planning officers were now recommending approval after an enforcement officer was shocked on his visit on January when stating that the development would never be signed off and requested it be rectified. Danny was of the opinion that this application had made a mockery of the whole planning process, and queried how an informed decision could possibly be made when previous plans had omitted key changes to the design of the scheme. Danny stated that this whole process had placed a huge emotional toll on his family, and had even made them consider moving house.

Jeff Asemi, Agent, spoke in support of the application. Jeff objected to some of the language used by others to describe the application property, including reference to it being used as a hotel which had no substance. Jeff stated that the original rear ground floor extension consisted off a conservatory of 3m in height and a side extension with a pitched roof to the boundary of 2.85m in height. Jeff stated that the replacement ground floor extension was lower, at 2.9m and 2.75m at the other end. The planning and enforcement officer had visited the site prior, during and after the installation of the roof covering. The original building had the guttering running adjacent to number 12, meaning the surface water would travel from the centre of the extension sideways to the boundary.

Sam Akhtar, Ward Member, commented on the application. Sam stated that this had been an emotive issue for both the applicant and neighbours. Sam added that he hoped that both parties could resolve their differences once the application had been determined by the Planning Committee.

Sam Aktar left the room for the remainder of this item.

Andrew Mickleburgh stated that applicants needed to be aware of the risks and potential consequences of relying on retrospective planning applications. Andrew queried whether the materials used to construct the skylight were a similar colour to those used for the rest of the roofing. Brian Conlon, Operational Lead – Development Management, stated that the materials and skylight could be secured via condition, whilst the skylight was not normally classed as the main roof.

Stephen Conway proposed that the application to be deferred to allow a site visit to be undertaken to better understand the context of the site and any impact on the neighbouring dwelling. This proposal was seconded by Chris Bowring and upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

RESOLVED That application number 220654 be deferred to allow a site visit to be undertaken to better understand the context of the site and any impact on the neighbouring dwelling.

103. APPLICATION NO.220570 - ST.CRISPIN'S SCHOOL, LONDON ROAD, WOKINGHAM

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a two-storey modular classroom unit to provide 4 no. classrooms plus additional office and WC facilities for a temporary period of two years.

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 209 to 230.

The Committee were advised that the Supplementary Planning Agenda included an update to the WBC Environmental Health consultation response to 'No objection' rather than 'No comments received'.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey commented that the applicant should consider the installation of sprinklers within the proposed unit.

RESOLVED That application number 220570 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives set out in agenda pages 201 to 214.

104. APPLICATION NO.220501 - EMMBROOK SCHOOL, EMMBROOK ROAD, WOKINGHAM

Proposal: Full application for the erection of a single storey flat roof modular building of 300m² to provide accommodation for common room and study area and associated administration offices for a temporary period of five years.

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 231 to 250.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda included an indicative image of the structure.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey commented that the applicant should consider the installation of sprinklers within the proposed unit.

RESOLVED That application number 220501 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives set out in agenda pages 232 to 235.

105. APPLICATION NO.220571 - "THE PIGGOTT C OF E SCHOOL", WARGRAVE ROAD, WARGRAVE

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a single storey modular classroom unit to provide 4 no. classrooms plus additional offices and WC facilities for a temporary period of five years.

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 251 to 278.

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

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey commented that the applicant should consider the installation of sprinklers within the proposed unit.

RESOLVED That application number 22057 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives set out in agenda pages 252 to 255.

106. APPLICATION NO.211508 - ROSA BUILDING, MULBERRY BUSINESS PARK, FISHPONDS ROAD, WOKINGHAM

Proposal: Full planning application for the proposed raising of existing roof of Rosa Building to create 11no. apartments to the second floor.

Applicant: Mr Schneck

Due to time constraints, this application was not considered.