

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 14 FEBRUARY 2024 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.50 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: David Cornish (Chair), Andrew Mickleburgh (Vice-Chair), Alistair Neal, Wayne Smith, Michael Firmager, Stuart Munro, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Tony Skuse and Bill Soane

Councillors Present and Speaking

Councillors: Jane Ainslie and Sarah Kerr

Officers Present

Gordon Adam, Principal Highways Development Control Officer
Brian Conlon, Operational Lead - Development Management
Connor Corrigan, Head of Strategic Development
Vincent Healy, SDL Solicitor
Liam Oliff, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Madeleine Shopland, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist

Case Officers Present

Emy Circuit
Mark Croucher
Benjamin Hindle
Christopher Howard

62. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

63. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 January 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

64. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Neal declared a personal interest in item 69 application 232475 on the grounds of being part of the Earley Town Council Planning Committee where the item was considered, but knowing that the item would come to Wokingham Borough Council Planning Committee, he took no part in that discussion.

Councillor Smith declared a personal interest in item 68 application 230074, he had read the report and would listen to the presentation, after which he would make up his own mind.

65. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

There were no items to be deferred or withdrawn.

**66. APPLICATION NO 230881 19-21 MARKET PLACE WOKINGHAM BERKSHIRE
RG40 1AP**

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of new mixed used development of 60no. dwellings plus Class E commercial floorspace, associated public and private amenity space, new pedestrian route, 36 car parking spaces, 1 loading bay and cycle

space for 115 bikes with 101 for residential in storage spaces. Following demolition of 19 & 20 Market Place and partial retention of 21 Market Place.

Applicant: Devonshire Metro Limited

The Committee considered a report on this application, set out in agenda pages 17 to 108.

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

- Town Council and ward member comments
- Clarification regarding the extent of land in Council control

Louise Timlin, Wokingham Town Council, spoke in objection to the application. She understood that the site would provide a high-quality development. However, she objected to the height of the 4 storey part of the development and added that it was not in keeping with the character of the area. She referenced CP3 from the Council's planning policy and said that this development was contrary to policy on height and massing. She mentioned a negative impact on the community garden. She emphasised the lack of any affordable housing in the application as a negative.

Patricia Donkin, resident, spoke in objection to the application. She mentioned that Howard Road was a one track cul-de-sac, that was in poor condition and that the application would bring extra traffic to the road, which would have an adverse impact on the safety of young children and the elderly residents. She referenced the Council's vision which mentioned tackling traffic congestion but was of the view that this application would not support this aim. She explained that Wokingham's services are already overloaded, including health and school services. She added that there was a lack of quality affordable homes provided in the application.

Rosalind Graham, agent, spoke in favour of the application. She said that there had been 18 months of dialogue with officers, stakeholders, specialist consultants and the local community. She explained that the application was on an under used brownfield site and would attract diverse new business to the area. She mentioned that the design and scale of the application kept the character of the town centre and added that the apartments had generous access. The application was supported by the Highways officer. She explained that this was a regeneration of a key opportunity site in Wokingham Town Centre and would help meet local housing need with high quality homes.

Jane Ainslie, ward member, spoke in objection of the application. She spoke of safety issues on Howard Road if it was used as a cut through as well as the car parking plans, which would also contribute to safety concerns. She added that Cockpit Path had plenty of school children going to Primary School, whose safety could potentially be put at risk. She requested that if the application were to be approved that parking permits were made 24/7 to stop overflow parking into Howard Road. She added that there was no affordable housing and no infrastructure for new residents. She explained that residents were disappointed that Robert Dyas would be taken out of the town centre in the application.

Councillor Shepherd-Dubey opened the discussion and mentioned that this application needed affordable housing. She then asked how safety concerns on Sale Gardens would be addressed. Emy Circuit, case officer, explained that most of the safety concerns given by residents reflected the current situation and that the plans would not increase safety concerns significantly.

Councillor Mickleburgh asked why there was no deferred viability assessment for affordable housing. The case officer confirmed that within the recommendation there was a review mechanism in the S106 agreement so if the economic environment changed during the build period, there would be a review. Councillor Mickleburgh then asked for further information regarding the safety concerns on Howard Road and he also asked for clarity on whether a condition could be added to prevent residents of Market Place applying for parking permits on Howard Road. The case officer confirmed that residents would not be eligible to apply for parking permits in this area. She added that in terms of the safety concerns on Howard Road, that the access was considered as part of the Road Safety Assessment, and that this included Howard Road. Gordon Adam, Principal Highways Development Control Officer, added that there were four stages of safety audits, 1-2 were in the design process, 3 was during implementation, and 4 was once the site was open.

Councillor Firmager asked what information was available on Anti-Social Behaviour in the area. The case officer explained that this was an existing issue with the site, but that the application would improve the issue with there being a presence in the building increasing surveillance during the day and night. Councillor Firmager then questioned the lack of affordable housing in the application and asked why this was the case. The case officer responded that it was complex to develop in the town centre location, and there were also physical constraints on the site which pushed up construction costs. Councillor Firmager then referenced previous conversations regarding road safety audits and asked what each stage entailed. Gordon Adam explained that the audit looked at pedestrian safety, visibility and crossing points within the design of a scheme, he then added that the designer then must respond to the comments which then had to be approved by officers.

Councillor Smith questioned why there was no site visit for this application. Connor Corrigan, Head of Strategic Development, reminded Members that the site could be seen from public land and members had been encouraged to visit the site in their own time during the committee briefing relating to the site.

Councillor Cornish explained that the Committee was bound by Government Policy on affordable housing and that if the application was rejected on these grounds, then it might be overturned at appeal. He felt that 60 houses in a sustainable part of the borough was a big positive. Councillor Cornish added that the major concern for him was the highways safety aspect.

Councillor Soane asked for clarification on the loading and delivery bays on Cockpit Path, specifically questioning the viability of multiple delivery vehicles being in the area at once and questioned where loading bays were for the arcade. Gordon Adam confirmed that the loading bays for the arcade were on Market Place until 7pm when they became a taxi rank. Connor Corrigan explained that there was sufficient space for multiple deliveries and there was parking located adjacent.

Councillor Smith queried that delivery vehicles only used Market Place for deliveries until 7pm and asked what would happen after. Gordon Adam responded that the majority of deliveries to retail occurred during the day.

Councillor Mickleburgh asked that a deferred viability assessment be clearly stated as a condition if the application was accepted. The case officer explained that it was in the Heads of Terms in Section 16 in the report.

It was proposed by Councillor Mickleburgh and seconded by Councillor Neal that the application be approved.

RESOLVED: That Application 230881 be approved subject to

A) conditions & informatives as set out in Appendix 1; and

B) a S106 agreement to secure the infrastructure set out in Section 16.1 of the appraisal.

Should the S106 legal agreement not be completed within three months of the date of this resolution the Planning Committee authorise the Head of Development Management to refuse planning permission due to failure to secure the necessary infrastructure impact mitigation (unless a longer period is agreed by officers on behalf of the Assistant Director - Place and Growth and confirmed in writing by the Local Planning Authority)

67. APPLICATION NO 231351 171 EVENDONS LANE, WOKINGHAM, RG41 4EH

Proposal: Outline application with all matters reserved except for access, for the proposed erection of a 64 bed care home (Use Class C2) with site access, parking, hard and soft landscaping and other associated works following demolition of existing commercial buildings.

Applicant: Bewley Homes

The Committee considered a report on this application, set out in agenda pages 109 to 214.

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

- Access at Blagrove Lane
- Revised Growth Strategy
- Future C3 Provision
- Wokingham Town Council Comments
- Briefing note prepared by the applicant shared with the Committee
- Correction p119 bullet point 4 '*Notwithstanding, on balance, the minor incursion into greenfield land does **not** outweigh the benefits the proposal presents*'

All members of the committee attended a site visit except Councillors Smith and Skuse.

Louise Timlin, Wokingham Town Council, spoke in objection to the application. She emphasised to the Committee that this application was in an unsustainable location and added that there were a lack of bus services for residents, staff and visitors. She explained that the access from Blagrove Lane could not take extra traffic, there were issues with a

lack of footpaths and narrow roads regarding the safety of residents, she referenced the loss of biodiversity as a negative.

Ian Andrews, resident, spoke in objection to the application. He noted that the application was only looking at access to the site and was surprised to see a report about the care home itself. He referenced policy CP4 and felt the entrance was in a dangerous location on a single-track road. He explained that traffic turning out of the new site would back up traffic to Evendons Lane. He explained that a recent sinkhole issue had backed up traffic along the road, increasing traffic on Blagrove Lane, and that this had been a disaster. He referenced another 30 bed care home and how he had heard of the 24/7 nature of that site with 60 cars per day at the site as well as visitors.

Peter Home, agent, spoke in favour of the application. He commented that due to the status of the Council's Local Plan and Housing Land Supply, the tilted balance applied, meaning that the application should be granted approval unless the impact of doing so significantly and demonstratively outweighed the benefits when assessed against policy. He mentioned that there was a significant unmet need for care within the Borough. He added that the site was previously developed. He stressed that the applicant's team had worked with officers to minimise harm and to fit the site into the existing landscape. He mentioned that the new access was safer than the current one and confirmed there would be a minibus for staff use. There had been no objections from statutory consultees. The site would provide 50 new jobs and there was a biodiversity net gain.

Sarah Kerr, ward member, spoke in objection to the application. She felt the negative aspects had been significantly down played in the officer report. She quoted the planning inspector's comments made in relation to previous applications, who had said that the site would encroach on urban land and was undeveloped. She commented that the application would have a massive visual impact. A lot of the land was farmland, and that this application would negatively affect the animals. Councillor Kerr questioned the sustainability of the site and explained that the residents would be forced to use cars as it was not safe for walking and cycling. Local facilities were some distance away. She added that the proposed level of parking was insufficient. She also mentioned that the application would put the Council in financial danger with a Social Care Reform Bill coming.

Councillor Shepherd-Dubey asked for comment on the viability of the access to the site as well as comment on the need in the Borough for care for dementia patients. Gordon Adam confirmed that the access went through the normal safety audit process, and it was considered within standards and safe, subject to the design which would be secured by condition. Benjamin Hindle, case officer added that with regards to previous applications, access had not formed part of the reason for refusal, and that the location of the access was safe. The case officer also provided the Committee with statistics relating to care need in the Borough and emphasised a large need for rooms for dementia patients in care homes. He highlighted the Planning Inspectors comments regarding the Council's needs figures.

Councillor Firmager asked about the speed limit on Evendons Lane. The case officer explained that the speed limit went up from 30mph to 60mph, 10 metres from the existing access to the site. This in part had formed the rationale behind the access on Blagrove Lane. A pedestrian crossing would act as natural traffic calming. Gordon Adam suggested that more people would access via Evendons Lane as it was more direct to Finchampstead Road.

Councillor Skuse asked if any assessment had been carried out through different times of day, to consider the primary school at the end of Evendons Lane, which increased traffic at drop off and pick up times as well as parking on the street. The case officer told the Committee that the school cannot prejudice planning considerations but that there was nothing stopping parents parking on the road as there were no parking restrictions in place. Gordon Adam explained that as part of the management plan deliveries, where possible, would be outside of school time.

Councillor Mickleburgh asked for clarity on the nature of the traffic using the site. It was outlined that many types of vehicles used the site, staff using cars, buses and minibuses as well as deliveries and visitors more infrequently. Councillor Mickleburgh questioned the current footprint of the site and what it would be with the new site. The case officer commented that the previous appeal decision related to a wider site and had included the part which had been fully designated for biodiversity net gain. The overall site area was significantly lower with the new site. He added that there was a biodiversity net gain due to the retention of a green space and this retention was tied down by 30 year legal agreement. Councillor Mickleburgh asked for clarity on whether the financial cost for the council was a material planning consideration. The case officer confirmed this was not a material planning consideration and did not hold any weight.

Councillor Soane asked why the existing access could not have a swept corner and what the difference in safety would be if this was the case. The case officer explained that if the access was widened it would require the built form to move northwards, which would encroach into the countryside. The Blagrove Lane access prevented an encroachment into the countryside. Councillor Soane also asked for data regarding accident records near the access to the site. Gordon Adam explained that the only accident records that were kept were casualty records and that there were none in the past 5 years.

Councillor Smith asked what the shortfall was in terms of care need. The case officer explained that the overall shortfall was 825 beds in the Borough. Councillor Smith also questioned why there was no trips data in the report. Gordon Adam stated that data around the existing and proposed was given in the comments on the application. Such data could be included in future reports to assist the Committee in their deliberations.

Councillor Neal asked if there were any plans to improve the road safety of the area. It was confirmed that Highways currently had no plans to make changes.

Councillor Cornish mentioned the idea of quiet roads and wanted quiet roads to be looked at as a concept in the areas surrounding the site, especially Evendons Lane and Blagrove Lane and referenced the Council's Active Travel scheme and how quiet roads would help in this respect. Councillor Cornish then asked whether it was possible to move the 30mph speed limit as far west as possible. Gordon Adam explained that this would have to be included in the Section 106 agreement as they would need a contribution from the developer. Councillor Cornish sought clarity on whether shifting the entrance would disturb the built form of the site. The case officer confirmed that shifting the entrance would have a bigger spacial impact. Councillor Cornish emphasised the difference between 60 dwellings and a 60 bed care home, the case officer added that 60 dwellings would be in contrary to CP6.

Councillor Smith asked if the trip movements would be higher or lower at the proposed site compared to the current site. It was confirmed that they would be lower.

Brian Conlon, Operational Lead – Development Management, sought clarity from the committee on whether the change to the speed limit was a formal recommendation.

Councillor Mickleburgh asked that Wokingham Borough Council engaged with the applicant to explore the possibility of funding changes of the speed limit as a part of the Section 106 agreement.

It was proposed by Councillor Skuse and seconded by Councillor Mickleburgh that the application be approved.

RESOLVED: That application 231531 be approved subject to

A) Completion of a legal agreement (S106) to secure the following HoT (Head of Terms):

- Framework Travel Plan (Including Minibus Provision)
- Off-site Pedestrian Crossing (Infrastructure Improvements)
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Employment Skills Plan

B) Conditions and informatives as set out in Appendix 1 (subject to any additions and updates agreed with the Assistant Director – Place and Growth between the date of the resolution and the issue of the decision):

C) Alternative recommendation: That the committee authorise the Head of Development Management to refuse planning permission in the event of an S106 agreement not being completed to secure appropriate contributions within six months of the date of the committee resolution (unless a longer period is agreed by the Head of Development Management in consultation with the Chairman of Planning Committee) for the following reason:

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

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

68. APPLICATION NO 230074 LAND ADJACENT TO SCHOOL ROAD AND ORCHARD ROAD, HURST, READING

Proposal: Outline planning application for the proposed erection of 23 dwellings with associated access and 15 carparking spaces for the local Primary school. Access only to be considered (with Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale to be reserved) (amended description) REVISED PLANS.

Applicant: Helmsley Land Ltd

The Committee considered a report on this application, set out in agenda pages 215 to 318.

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

- Conflicts with the spatial strategy
- Comments from Children's Services on school places
- List of nearby facilities
- Transport Statement
- Re-consultation
- Public rights of way

All councillors attended a site visit except Councillors Smith, Skuse and Cornish.

Councillor Cornish mentioned that the Council had received a number of Freedom of Information requests (FOIs) regarding the application and that he had looked into the decision to defer the item to a future committee if important information had been withheld. He confirmed that he was satisfied that nothing material had been withheld and that a deferral would miss the determination period so the item might be approved automatically.

Tony Robinson, Hurst Parish Council, spoke in objection of the application. He told the committee that Hurst Parish Council submitted 2 documents giving clear evidence for refusal. He referenced previous applications in Hurst and said that many applications on greenfield sites had been refused in the past. He refuted the applicant's view that important planning policies were outdated due to the lack of a 5 Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS) and said this was not the Council's stance as they had refused a 3 dwelling application in Hurst in March 2023. He emphasised that new developments needed to be sustainable, and that Hurst was an unsustainable location. He mentioned the lack of facilities in Hurst such as narrow and inadequate pavements, having to cross the A321 twice to access the village shop, no street lighting, poor bus service and no cycle lanes meaning there was an overreliance on cars.

Jessica Lake, resident, spoke in objection to the application. She also referenced previous applications in Hurst and questioned why this application was any different. She cited a lack of green space in the new development and a harm to local nature with the loss of a wildlife corridor. She felt that the site would be highly visible from School Road and result in a loss of visual amenity. She mentioned that there was unmonitored parking and that there would not be enough spaces and said there would be 50 at school time which would also cause safety concerns. She argued that if Hurst had previously been considered unsustainable then the Committee should reject this application.

Douglas Bond, agent, spoke in favour of the application. He explained that all the issues with the application had been correctly addressed. He referenced the affordable homes within the application as a positive. He argued that this part of Hurst was sustainable, and that the application was in keeping with the size of Hurst. He explained that there had been no objections from the Highways team and the new car park provided would be a benefit to residents, he told the committee the spaces in the car park exceeded the 11-12 cars using School Road on average. He felt the landscape issues were minor.

Councillor Smith asked if the Council had exceeded the allowance of 100 dwellings in Limited Development Locations. Mark Croucher, case officer confirmed that this was the case. Councillor Smith asked if 33-37 of these were located in Hurst, and the case officer confirmed this to be true. Councillor Smith asked if the figures on trip movements were with the original plan of two entrances or with one access to the site. Gordon Adam said this was with the one entrance. Councillor Smith asked about the biodiversity impact of this application. The case officer confirmed that the biodiversity loss would be mitigated by an

offsite contribution and that it was in the legal agreement to make sure there was a biodiversity net gain. Councillor Smith made a number of other points regarding the local play area, distance to the nearest secondary school being over 3km, lack of local facilities, financial issues for the local bus company as well as drainage issues.

Councillor Munro was of the view that the site and Hurst were unsustainable. The case officer said previous applications had been different in scale and that this was a material factor. He also reminded the Committee that they needed to look at the application on its own merit and not compare to previous application.

Councillor Mickleburgh asked what weighting would be given to the exceedance of 100 homes in Limited Development Locations. The case officer explained that policy CP17 referred to the future allocation of sites and sites to be identified in the future and that Members should look at what the harm was of exceeding 100 homes. Councillor Mickleburgh added that he had not been convinced that the whole of Hurst was unsustainable when making the site visit and saw material differences between this application and previous ones in Hurst.

Councillor Neal asked whether removing parked cars from School Road would lead to increased incidents of speeding. Gordon Adam confirmed this could be the case. The case officer added that there was a 20mph limit at school times.

Councillor Cornish asked if Hurst had a Neighbourhood Plan or Local Green Space status. The case officer confirmed Hurst did not have either of these. Councillor Cornish asked if there had been any comment from Children's Services on school places at primary and secondary schools. The case officer explained that the site would increase demand for primary school places by 1.2 places per year. He added that it was rare in the Borough for someone to live both near a primary and secondary school. Councillor Cornish added that the Borough needed 12000 houses and that they need to go somewhere with space.

Councillor Skuse noted the amount of affordable housing in the application as a positive and mentioned the cost involved for the Council if the application did go to appeal.

At this point in the meeting 10.15pm it was proposed by Councillor Cornish and seconded by Councillor Firmager that the meeting be extended to 11pm in order for all items to be considered. Upon being put to the vote, this was agreed.

The case officer responded to Councillor Skuse's points by explaining that the committee could not refuse an application on financial fears considering former appeals, it had to be strictly on the grounds of planning reasons.

Councillor Smith referenced a previous planning inspector's comment which had called policies out of date because the Council couldn't demonstrate a 5YHLS and that policy promoted secure and sustainable development. The case officer clarified that there was diminished weight on the policies, not no weight. He added that sustainable development in paragraph 11 of the NPPF meant the planning system had three overarching objectives, which were independent and needed to be pursued in mutually supportive ways and stated an economic objective, a social objective, and an environmental objective.

Brian Conlon clarified that reference to other appeals did not make a site acceptable or not but did provide officers and councillors with an indication of what was or was not acceptable on a site. He added that a particular appeal result did not guarantee the same for another application. He also explained that the sustainability of Hurst itself was different to looking at the relationship between the site and the facilities in the village. He indicated

that the assessment concluded that the site was not wholly unsustainable in relation to what was in Hurst and that Hurst was a desirable and practical place to live.

Councillor Cornish noted that were the Committee to approve the application, then affordable housing had been given great weight.

Councillor Smith proposed that the committee refuse the application on the grounds of sustainability specifically related to travel and reliance on travel by car and the impact on the landscape setting. He confirmed that the conflict with the development plan and the absence of a section 106 agreement should also be reasons for refusal.

This proposal was seconded by Councillor Munro.

RESOLVED: That application 230074 be refused on the grounds of

1. The proposal represents unacceptable unplanned development outside of development limits, within the countryside and contrary to the spatial objectives of the development plan and to policies CP1, CP3, CP6, CP9, CP11 and CP17 of the Core Strategy, Policies CC01, CC02 and CC03 of the MDD Local Plan, the Borough Design Guide SPD and sections 2, 4, 9 and 15 of the NPPF.
2. The application site is within an unsustainable location that would result in future residents relying on private motor vehicles for day-to-day needs and would not encourage a modal shift towards sustainable modes of transport, by reason of the countryside location outside of settlement limits, the limited facilities within Hurst that would be within a safe and convenient walking distance, quality of the walking/cycling & environment and limited public transport links. The proposal is contrary to policies CP1, CP2, CP3, CP6 and CP11 of the Core Strategy, policies CC01 and CC02 of the MDD Local Plan, the Borough Design Guide SPD and section 8 & 9 of the NPPF.
3. The proposed development will have a negative and detrimental impact on the landscape and character & appearance of the area by reason of the loss of an open green field in the countryside which an important rural characteristic to the setting of the village of Hurst, contrary to policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 of the Core Strategy, Policies CC01, CC02, CC03 and TB21 of the MDD Local Plan, the Borough Design Guide SPD, the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment and section 15 of the NPPF.
4. In the absence of a completed Legal Agreement, the proposed development fails to make adequate provision for affordable housing, contrary to policy CP5 of the Core Strategy and section 6 of the NPPF.
5. In the absence of a completed legal agreement, the proposed development fails to secure opportunities for training, apprenticeships and other vocational initiatives to develop local employability skills contrary to MDD policy Local Plan TB12.
6. In the absence of a completed Legal Agreement, the proposed development fails to make adequate contributions to civic and open spaces, allotments, sport and recreational facilities, contrary to MDD Local Plan policy TB08, Core Strategy policy CP4 and Sections 4 and 8 of the NPPF.
7. In the absence of a completed Legal Agreement, the development fails to secure a schedule off-site highway works to improve pedestrian & sustainable travel infrastructure and the management/adoption of internal estate roads, car park and

open spaces, contrary to Core Strategy policy CP1, CP3, CP4 and CP6 and MDD Local Plan policy CC03 and TB08 and sections 4, 8, 9 and 12 of the NPPF.

8. In the absence of a completed legal agreement, the proposed development fails to demonstrate and secure that there would be no biodiversity net loss as a result of the proposal by either on-site mitigation or off-site compensation, contrary to Core Strategy policy CP3 and CP7, MDD Local Plan Policy TB23 and section 15 of the NPPF.

69. APPLICATION NO 232475 TOB1, EARLEY GATE, UNIVERSITY OF READING, READING RG6 6EQ

Proposal: Full planning application for the erection of the headquarters building of European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECWMF) with access parking and landscaping, following demolition of existing buildings.

Applicant: Mace Group, on behalf of the Government Property Agency

The Committee considered a report on this application, set out in agenda pages 319 to 374.

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

- An additional condition added to the recommendations set out in Appendix 1

All councillors attended a site visit except Councillors Smith and Skuse.

Nick Paterson-Neild, agent, spoke in favour of the application. He explained that the project would be funded by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and met industry leading net-zero Carbon standards. He told the Committee that the centre was built in Shinfield in 1979 but that the current site did not provide the space required for the long-term need. He added that the building was of high architectural design quality and was in a sustainable location with great transport links. He concluded by saying this application ensured the world's leading global weather prediction station remained in Wokingham Borough.

Councillor Smith asked whether Reading Borough Council refusing this application in full due to Highways safety was an issue. Gordon Adam reassured Members that the application wouldn't have a major impact on traffic levels.

Members noted that this was a fantastic application and that they fully supported keeping this station in the Borough.

It was proposed by Councillor Cornish and seconded by Councillor Skuse that the application be approved.

RESOLVED: That application 232475 be approved subject to

A) Completion of a S106 agreement and;

B) Conditions as set out in the report and amended in the members update (if required) and additional condition in the Members update;

C) Should the S106 agreement not be signed by the applicant by six months of the committee resolution, delegate to the Assistant Director of Planning to refuse the application unless a longer timeframe is agreed with the Chair of Planning Committee in consultation with the Assistant Director of Planning.