



Arborfield & Newland Parish Council

The Parish Office, Arborfield Village Hall, Eversley Road
Arborfield, Berkshire, RG2 9PQ

Tel: 0118 976 1489

E-mail: parishclerk@arborfield.org.uk

Website: www.arborfield.org.uk

20th February 2015

Matt Melville
Development Management
Wokingham Borough Council
Civic Offices, Shute End
Wokingham
Berks
RG40 1BN

Comments on Amended Information (February 2015)

Dear Matt,

**Re: Updated Application O/2014/2280 - Arborfield Garrison and Land adjoining
Arborfield, Reading**

I am writing to you in response to the consultation on the above planning application.

As stated in our initial representation letter the Parish Council is generally in support of the proposal because of the additional infrastructure that it will bring to the area, and because of the quality of the design and character that is proposed in the plans. We are pleased to see that several areas of concern raised in our representation on the initial plans have been addressed by the developer. However there are still some outstanding areas that we feel need to be addressed at this early stage to ensure a high quality and comprehensive development is achieved for the current and future residents of Arborfield.

The following letter will clarify which aspects of the proposal we are in agreement with and will detail where we feel more information is required.

Layout and Design

Design Code

The Parish Council are pleased to see that the addendum to the Design and Access Statement (DAS) now provides further detail and background to the future detailed design of the

development. The addendum demonstrates that the developer has undertaken significant research into the character of Arborfield and has taken cues from the surrounding area including recent development within the wider borough. More detail will inevitably come forward at reserved matters stages, and we would like to understand from WBC how they intend to manage reserved matters to ensure appropriate controls are in place to maintain the quality and character of the design during the development of more detailed plans through reserved matters. We welcome the fact that the DAS now gives the strong framework required to ensure there are design principles in place that will enable the development as a whole to be cohesive within itself and with the surrounding area.

The DAS addendum also sets out the use of a green grid across the site to provide links to the existing landscape assets. The overarching design goal to deliver a comprehensive Garden Village is supported and welcomed.

The overall characteristics of the different character areas have now been detailed, with key landscape details identified and incorporated. In addition the legibility of the development as a whole is improved through a hierarchy of roads to help residents and visitors navigate and to help delineate individual neighbourhoods, and define private, semi-private and public areas. The use of 'entry statements' when entering the site and to connect the community hub and Garden Village centre is also supported.

The DAS addendum goes on to set out guidelines for specific aspects of the development and how future designs should have regard to them. The guidelines to protect the individual identity of settlements is particularly welcomed.

District Centre

Whilst it still appears that the District Centre (which we believe should be called the Village Centre from the outset to ensure designers are thinking of it at the right scale) would be sizable with the appearance of an urban rather than rural area it is recognised that the future community will need facilities and that these will be provided by the Village Centre. The Parish Council feels strongly that the design of the Village Centre is critical to setting the character of the area, and we would like to ask WBC to consult widely as the detailed design for the Village Centre is brought forward. In addition the design code details that density will increase towards the centre of the site where the Village Centre will be located which will create a transition between the wider rural area and the new development.

The DAS states that the relatively unconstrained nature of this area, combined with its location close to the interface of the site with the adjoining Marino Family Land (MFL) site to the south and adjoining the Nine Mile Ride extension, make it an ideal location for the new Village Centre. The proposed location of the Village Centre is agreed, and welcomed as giving a traditional centre to the new development which we hope will help to create a sense of community and a natural meeting place for residents.

The DAS states that the Village Centre is to reflect village/town centre pattern with busy streets and spaces characterised by active ground floor frontages with residential or commercial accommodation above. Built typologies within this character area would generally comprise terraced houses and apartment buildings at a higher density, often with non-residential uses at ground level. This appears to be a sensible approach and the mix of residential and commercial within the Village Centre is supported. The DAS indicates that building heights would be relatively consistent and could be up to four storeys in places to create feature buildings and gateway markers. Where taller buildings are proposed these should be carefully designed and positioned to integrate with the rest of the Village Centre and surrounding area, particularly where they are to form visual markers to aid legibility of the area.

It is requested that more detail is provided on what is envisaged for the proposed food store and we would like to ensure that this will be appropriately sized in relation to the proposed development, i.e. not so large that it will create a destination store bringing traffic into the area solely to visit the retail facilities. The DAS addendum sets out that buildings with larger footprints such as the proposed food store and potentially the retained library and gymnasium should be incorporated within the wider geometric framework of the character area. This approach is supported to ensure that the larger stores do not dominate the character of the Village Centre.

Density

More information was also requested on how densities can be properly achieved in an acceptable unifying design across the site, especially where areas of two different densities converge.

The addendum to the Design and Access Statement sets out that the differences in density across the site are to have a discernible transition from rural to urban by increasing density towards the hub and areas well served by public transport. As mentioned above the Parish recognises that the Village Centre needs to accommodate several facilities to serve future residents and welcomes the mix of these facilities with residential use. It is also therefore

considered that the higher density as a result of this is justified, providing it is carefully designed to blend with the lower density of the surrounding residential areas.

To facilitate the transition between the surrounding rural areas and the development there will be a 'green edge' buffer to provide containment to the development and prevent development sprawling into the wider landscape or merging with other developments, this is welcomed.

Education

The originally submitted Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) states that the land for the secondary school will be made available as soon as possible, although this relies on the MoD vacating the site. As mentioned in the Parish Council's initial representation letter application it is still unclear when the secondary school will be delivered, both in real terms and in the context of the development phasing, and further clarification is requested regarding this, and whether the delivery can be secured by Legal Obligation.

Employment

The Parish Council asked for more information on how and where the new employment will be provided and what type of employment is envisaged. No new information has been provided however it is recognised that this may come at later stage through reserved matters applications in terms of the type of commercial units to be provided.

Transport

The Parish raised several concerns relating to the transport impacts of the proposed development and the information put forward by the developer to justify the impact of the development on the transport network. The Transport Assessment addendum provides additional information and justification for the traffic flows and modelling data. However several aspects of the proposal still raise concerns and we would make the following comments:

Biggs Lane / Langley Common Road

The revised junction on Langley Common Road is a big improvement on the previous proposal. The revised junction would result in the loss of 2 trees. Whilst in principle the Parish Council would advocate for the retention of trees wherever possible in this case it is recognised that the loss is outweighed by the much improved junction proposal. However, the revised plan shows Baird Road remaining open for all traffic - in effect, duplicating the last section of Langley Common Road, with a new footway/cycleway on the north side. The developer has submitted no revised traffic flows to look at, but the impact of this will be to bring large volumes of traffic past

existing houses in Baird Road and part of Penrose Park, with no justification. The Parish Council strongly object to this.

Commonfield Lane / Barkham Bridge

It is positive that analysis has been undertaken to assess the impact of either widening Commonfield Lane to full two way vehicle operation or to restrict it to “access only”. The Transport Assessment concluded that maintaining the existing Commonfield Lane with its restricted two way operation is the most appropriate solution. The Parish Council is concerned that it would not be a good use of money to widen Barkham Bridge, and that there are better alternative ways of dealing with the safety issue. Providing an oasis of capacity here when the rest of the Barkham Road corridor will be heavily overloaded makes no sense at all. It is preferred that this money be put to better use in making Commonfield Lane a proper 2-way road and redesigning the junction at the Barkham Street end. If this cannot be done now, it is requested that a contribution is sought from the developer for this to be implemented at a later date.

California Crossroads

£1.4m is due to be set aside to implement a scheme to 'improve' the junction at California Crossroads. Being at the heart of the local community, options are likely to focus on things other than reducing traffic queues. A steering group is being set up to oversee the development of proposals that could have serious traffic implications for Arborfield and the Parish Council request to be included on the group.

Arborfield Relief Road

The Parish requested more details on how the developer will work with the Borough Council to achieve the best outcome for the Relief Road. No additional information on this subject was found in the updated documents.

It is considered that the proposed 5-arm Langley Common Road roundabout would have insufficient capacity. The additional information shows that the design of the standard roundabout at Langley Common/ Biggs Lane has been amended and this is welcomed subject to the Highway Officers views.

The Parish Council is also pleased to see that the Transport Assessment Addendum now justifies the transport modelling assessment for the gyratory junction at The Bull in Arborfield village and that this has been done in agreement with Wokingham Borough Council.

However concerns remain that if the Arborfield Relief Road is not delivered there would be significantly increased congestion around Arborfield to unacceptable levels. In addition some clarity on the mechanism to be used to limit occupations in the proposed development in advance of the Relief Road completion is still requested.

Other Highway Alterations

The confirmation that Baird Road will not be re-opened through the military gate is welcomed and we would like to seek assurances from WBC that a more permanent closure will be delivered.

The traffic assessments undertaken on the Barkham Road corridor were questioned. The Transport Assessment addendum defends the methodology used which was agreed as being appropriate by Wokingham Borough Council, and this is accepted by the Parish.

Nine Mile Ride Extension

More information on the delivery of the Nine Mile Ride Extension is requested, given it straddles the two applications at Hogwood Farm and the Garrison site. The timing of this in relation to the phasing of the development, including the delivery of the new secondary school should be confirmed.

Facilities Parking

It is requested that the developers advise how they envisage car parking for the church will be accommodated without inconveniencing local people and no such information was found in the newly submitted documents.

Public transport

The current public transport proposals remain inadequate. The updated submission sets out that no new information is available at this time as discussions are currently ongoing with Wokingham Borough Council. Concern is expressed about the lack of detailed proposals, and seeks improvements in the services to Reading and Wokingham, plus express services to either Winnersh or Twyford or both. The new services should precede occupation of the houses that they are designed to serve to establish sustainable travel patterns from the beginning. Incentives such as a discounted/free ticket to initially encourage people to use the services are encouraged, use of which it is hoped will continue afterward.

Greenways

Concern was expressed that there was insufficient linkage between the AGLC development and the Hogwood Farm site. The Parish appreciates the additional information submitted on this subject however the Parish do not think the proposed Greenways scheme is good enough. It is considered that the report submitted by Laurence Heath from the NP Greenways Working Group as the outcome to aim for.

Flooding

The additional information submitted does not provide any further assessment of the potential impact of flooding both caused by the development to the surrounding area or of potential flooding to the new development itself. The Parish Council's initial concerns on this basis therefore still stand and it is not considered that the Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF; concern remains that the level of assessment is inadequate for the proposed development. It is reiterated that groundwater flooding must be paid particular attention, given the occurrences of flooding locally to the area over recent years, and the compounding nature of factors which lead to a flooding occurrence.

Strong concerns remain over the robustness of the submitted Flood Risk Assessment and the implications this has for the proposed layout and development of the site and the interaction between the two developments at Arborfield Garrison and Hogwood Farm.

Sewage

An indication of the status of the works that Thames Water are due to undertake and when these might be completed to allow for the proposed development, is requested.

SANG

The update to the SANG strategy to provide a wider green link between the northern and southern section of the SDL is supported, with more direct routes from the Linear Park to West Court SANG.

The updated information states that the car park for the Northern SANG has been removed and more details on where visitors to this SANG are expected to park are requested.

Trees and Hedgerows

An update to the tree survey has been supplied to show which of the surveyed trees are covered by new Tree Preservation Orders, which is welcomed. The retention of trees and hedgerows

wherever possible is supported. The surrounding area is rural in character and the retention of these key features will help to preserve this aesthetic and integrate the proposed development with the surrounding area.

Open Space

The Parish Council had concerns over the reduction in public open space compared to the previously withdrawn application and more detail was requested on the current and proposed numbers of sports pitches. Confirmation was also requested on whether the secondary school pitches will be available for public use.

The Green Infrastructure Strategy Addendum shows that the open space area calculations have been updated following the changes to the parameter plan and that these meet the Wokingham Borough Council requirements for open space. The sports pitches provision would also now meet Wokingham Borough Council standards.

There are still concerns over the loss of key areas of open space. Areas such as those adjacent to the tennis courts are current amenity space for residents of Penrose Park and other developments in the area and the provision of new SANGS etc. which are mitigation for the new development cannot be used to compensate for loss of existing open space. Arborfield Parish Council welcomes the revised master plan which shows the area next to the tennis courts as being used for allotments rather than housing.

Community Facilities

The Parish Council previously raised concern over the removal of the existing community centre, which was previously to be retained and requested more information on this. No new information has been found and so more information is still sought on the new community centre in the village centre and the justification for the eventual closure of the existing community centre.

Heritage

The Heritage Statement Addendum assesses the heritage value of primarily built heritage assets based on the 'four values' as set out in English Heritage's publication, Conservation Principles. It is the combination of these values which determines the significance of the asset.

The further and broader community usage of the stables and their 'green' is supported, and the safeguarding of the space around the stables as 'Community Allotments' is welcomed. The

Parish Council is also pleased that the Paddock is to be safeguarded as a green space in perpetuity by designating it the 'Village Green'.

The Heritage Statement Addendum sets out that the proposed new development will be a major improvement over the extant poor-quality, temporary buildings. The use of a management plan is encouraged, secured by condition on any forthcoming planning consent as an appropriate way of ensuring the long-term future of the Scheduled Moat.

Financial Contributions

More information on how the delivery of the infrastructure will be comprehensively delivered is requested, in terms of the phasing between the two sites with a programme of delivery so that appropriate contributions are available as necessary. As before, reassurance is sought that the contributions will be received in sufficient time to allow any mitigation works to be completed before the impact occurs.

In addition, it is reiterated that there is no mention in the s106 heads of terms in respect to financial contributions for Country Parks and Swimming Pools. The Swimming Pool contribution from this many dwellings would be of considerable value to the Local Authority. It is therefore requested that Officers robustly defend their requirement for a Pools contribution.

I hope this is of assistance and clarifies the Parish Council's observations and concerns in relation to the updated information submitted by the developer, however if you require further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards

Alison Ward

Alison Ward

Parish Clerk

Comments on Amended Information (February 2015)



Barkham Parish Council

*Small Oaks
Doles Lane
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG41 4EB*

*Telephone / Fax
E-mail*

*0118 977 2857
clerk@barkham-parishcouncil.org.uk*

Mr M. Melville
Development Control
Wokingham Borough Council

16th February 2015

Dear Matthew,

Application Number O/2014/2280
Arborfield Garrison & Adjoining Land – revised & additional details

Barkham Parish Council Position Statement

The following observations supplement our previous response dated 5 December 2014.

1. Transport Assessment.

AGLC dispute our figures on trip rates. For information, our estimate was based on a survey carried out at Penrose Park. The base traffic numbers are similar to the AGLC survey: it is the question of how the numbers are manipulated that is the problem (see appendix 1 of BPC response dated 5 Dec 2014).

There is little point in getting into a protracted argument at this stage. More to the point, BPC would like to highlight that several junctions in the area are already at capacity, including Arborfield Cross, Langley Common Road/Biggs lane, Barkham Bull and Barkham Road/Bearwood Road and also Barkham Bridge. This is endorsed by WBC in supporting information provided in the planning application for the new secondary school (see planning application F/2015/0001 Transport Statement figure 8).

This means that it is unrealistic to expect additional capacity to become available through Barkham. Consequently AGLC must work with WBC to develop a long term strategy to route traffic to and through the corridor that runs between M4 junctions 10 and 11: this corridor includes major employment areas at Winnersh Triangle and Green Park and is the access point for the M4 east and westbound, while the M4 is being presumably to increase capacity. This corridor is likely to be destination or transit stage for around 50% of employment traffic* and it is quite possible that this share as will increase as Winnersh Triangle and Green Park expand and as the M4 will be modified as a “smart motorway” – presumably to increase capacity.

* Figure based on Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan Survey, carried out in September 2012 and reflects residents with place of work in Reading, Windsor & Maidenhead, Slough, Oxfordshire, Winnersh, West Berkshire and a proportion in London and “Elsewhere”.

2. Biggs Lane junction.

The Langley Common Road / Baird Road junction proposals are discussed in the Transport Addendum AGLC/HPA/DOC/9/Addendum Section 4.2 and the proposed layout is shown in shown in Appendix I1 as drawing No. ITB9092-GA. A "Potential Mitigation Scheme along Langley Common Road" is shown in Drawing No. ITB9092-GA-009 in the same Appendix.

The proposals appear to take no account of the Arborfield Cross Relief Road, this was perhaps excusable for the original application since the proposals for the relief road were in an early stage of development when it was submitted. WBC's preferred location of the southern roundabout between the Langley Common roundabout and the Poppyfields roundabout was made public in November 2014. It was clearly known to AGLC as its route is shown on page 13 of the Executive Summary, but it does not appear in other key documents, such as the illustrative master plan (Design and Access Statement AGLC/HPA/DOC/2 Revision A – page 81). It seems odd that AGLC seem rather schizophrenic about whether or not to reflect the relief road in their plans.

The new proposals for the junction may represent some improvement on the earlier ones. However it still does nothing to discourage vehicles from the AGLC site choosing to travel via Langley Common Road and Bearwood Road towards Winnersh Triangle or M4 Eastbound, rather than taking a route via the Relief Road.

The design of the road layout in the area needs to be a solution that integrates the junctions at Biggs Lane, Eversley Road (the existing Bramshill Hunt roundabout) and the southern end of the relief road. The design needs to maximise the proportion of SDL traffic using the relief road and minimising the proportion using Langley Common Road and passing through Arborfield Cross. Whether or not sections of Baird Road should be closed, and possible design elements elsewhere in the SDL, for example traffic calming near the proposed primary school adjacent to Biggs Lane, may also be significant.

BPC is not yet convinced that a properly integrated scheme has been prepared. A layout that includes a succession of five roundabouts within a mile, (running from the Biggs Lane junction to the western gateway on the A327) does not seem entirely well thought out. It should be noted that development of the northern part of the SDL will be the final stage of the development to be constructed, which allows some leeway in finalising a more integrated plan. BPC accepts the proposition but forward by WBC that we should “not to rule anything out” when making long term improvements.

BPC agrees with idea of roundels to reduce speed on Langley Common Road (see Transport Assessment Addendum A Appendix II), but should not the speed limit be reduced to 30mph?

3. Barkham Bridge

Barkham Bridge is discussed in Transport Addendum AGLC/HPA/DOC/9/Addendum Section 7.1 and the proposed layout is shown in drawing number ITB9092-GA-012 contained at Appendix U1.

The acceptance that the bridge should be widened is welcome. Widening is definitely desirable on safety grounds, but nobody should run away with idea that it will solve the congestion problem in the area: the junction at the Barkham Bull will instead become main bottleneck.

The main plan shows the bridge being widened on the northern side of the road. Widening on the southern side might be preferable as it would ease the severity of the bends approaching the bridge and would reduce the potential for vehicles to stray into the path of oncoming traffic. It should be possible to do this within the existing highway boundary and it would also avoid interfering with a large pipe that crosses the Barkham Brook on the north side of the bridge.

It is noted that the passing traffic insets in the drawing appear to consider commercial vehicles in one direction passing cars in the other direction but not commercial vehicles passing each other in both directions.

4. Commonfield Lane.

The Barkham Street /Commonfield Lane corridor proposals are discussed in Transport Addendum AGLC/HPA/DOC/9/Addendum Section 7.2 and the proposed layout is shown in Drawing No. ITB9092-GA-025A which is attached as Appendix V1.

The proposals are for about seven passing places along Commonfield Lane. The indicative passing bay diagrams consider only cars passing cars, no account is taken of the possibility of commercial or farm vehicles along the lane. While this is an improvement on the existing arrangement where strips of mud masquerade as passing places, it is felt that passing places should only be considered as an interim solution.

BPC preference is to widen Commonfield lane for 2-way traffic, with an adjacent greenway also provided. A safe crossing point at bridleway BA14 is required – this can also provide a traffic calming opportunity. Consideration of improvements to the Barkham Ride/Commonfield Lane junction, incorporating a roundabout, need to be considered, as proposed in our original response of 5 December 2014.

The proposals for the Barkham Street/ Barkham Ride/ Commonfield Lane junction are a negligible improvement on the current arrangements. A roundabout would help to reduce speeds and improve the prospect of creating a safe crossing to BA11.

5. Greenways

The Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan Greenways Group has devoted considerable effort to examining proper cycle routes. A copy of the draft report is attached. Some priorities which relate to the SDL in general and to provide safe routes to the new secondary school are shown in Section 10 of the report and are summarised below:

Cycleways required, primarily to provide safe routes to school.

- SDL-Arborfield Cross
- SDL-Shinfield via relief road
- SDL-Barkham via Commonfield Lane, BA11, BA10
- SDL- Barkham Ride via BA14
- SDL-Finchampstead via Nine Mile Ride

In addition a greenway including equestrian access from Poppyfields roundabout to BA14 through the SDL is required (see Section 9).

The maps shown Design and Access Statement AGLC/HPA/DOC/2 (Revision A) page 135 and also in Green Infrastructure Strategy Addendum AGLC/HPA/DOC/11 Addendum A do reflect these ideas in many respects. Unfortunately the key is difficult to decipher so it is not clear exactly what is proposed in some situations. BPC would like to highlight the following points:

- A direct route across the SANG linked to a safe crossing of Biggs Lane required.
- A safe crossing of Commonfield Lane is required, opposite bridleway BA14.
- BA14 should be upgraded to all weather cycling standard. This would provide a route to much of Finchampstead.
- The greenway following Commonfield Lane should be off road and also at all weather cycling standard.
- The link from Commonfield Lane to Barkham Church can be off road by providing a safe crossing of Barkham Ride, and thence via bridleway BA11.
- The route heading north east towards Barkham Hill should be upgraded to all weather cycling standard.

BPC would like to stress that a route must be off road to count as a greenway and that it should have a hard all weather surface. Safe crossings of main roads are essential.

BPC would expect that as part of any planning approval, there should be a commitment to make available adequate funding to support the creation of a high quality greenway system to link the SDL to local communities.

6. Landscaping along Langley Common Road

BPC highlighted this as an issue in original response. It is welcomed that AGLC acknowledges this need. Describing the Northern Perimeter Character Area, it is stated that the boundary to Langley Common Road should be enhanced with new planting to create a country lane character. The need for a “softer feel approaching the countryside from the north east “and that “the edge facing Langley Common Road should present a positive frontage incorporating tree planting” are also identified (DAS Addendum AGLC/HPA/DOC/2 Rev A Addendum pages 53-56 refer.)

However this is not reflected in Plans Document AGLC/HPA/DOC/3 (Version 5) - PL11 Open Space Parameter Plan, where a dark green strip should be shown along Langley Common Road, as is indicated for other areas.

7. Housing height at village edge

In the interests of achieving the “softer feel approaching the countryside” mentioned above, housing height should be lower along the edges of the Northern Perimeter Character Area. Consequently cells W, Y and Z require similar treatment as is proposed in cell T, where housing height is limited to 2 storeys on the periphery of the development. (See Plans Document AGLC/HPA/DOC/3 (Version 5) - PL09 Building Storey Heights Parameter Plan)

8. Heritage – Infirmary Stables

BPC welcomes the submission of the document entitled “The Infirmary stables at Arborfield Garrison – Towards a Sustainable Future”.

The idea of creating a “War Horse” museum to communicate the equine role in World War I and the military association of the site would be very exciting indeed. The parish council would be happy to cooperate in any way that it can and would welcome a dialogue with AGLC as plans progress. BPC hopes that English Heritage will be able to provide some support and guidance in taking this project forward.

9. Langley House

BPC cannot understand why this building is not mentioned and is proposed for demolition.

Langley House may not have any significant historical importance but it does represent the local red brick architectural style characteristic of the Walter Estate. It could be retained as a landmark building on the corner of the development. This would also provide additional housing units, as conversion would entail subdivision into a number of dwellings.

It would also be helpful if AGLC and WBC could indicate what is proposed for the adjacent pond which lies between the SDL boundary and Langley Common Road.

10. Retail

BPC questioned in our earlier response whether it would be better to have two smaller supermarkets rather than one large one that might become a destination.

The reply from AGLC (Retail Response – reference AGLC/HPA/DOC/11/Addendum A) has to be disputed

In para 1.17 it says that “the foodstore is not intended to become a destination in its own right; rather it is expected to be able to offer a comprehensive range of convenience goods to allow future residents to be able to undertake weekly (e.g. ‘main food’) shops.” Para 1.18 it goes on to refer to the need to achieve a store which is viable to a supermarket operator.

The proposal is for a store of up to 4,000 m². However several of the leading stores in Wokingham are about half this size. Based on the Wokingham Borough Retail Study of 2007, Waitrose in Wokingham was 2248 m², Waitrose at Twyford is 1939 m², Sainsburys at Winnersh 2025 m², Morrisons at Woosehill is 1925 m² while the more recent Lidl store in Molly Millars Lane is understood to be that of only 1600 m². A visit to any of these stores will reveal many people doing their weekly shop – there can be no question that a 4000 m² would be a destination store and that stores of around 1600 to 2000 m² are viable.

11. Name of Community

The name of the community now needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Describing the development as “Arborfield Garrison” is becoming inappropriate and confusing. The Executive Summary refers to the AGLC development as “Arborfield Garden Village”. This is not acceptable as over 80% of the AGLC site is in Barkham.

It is clear that a new name must be sought and it would be desirable if one is chosen for the whole of the SDL (including the MFT area) and that it should have a local association. AGLC have indicated that they would carry out a public consultation on this: BPC would encourage this to be done sooner rather than later. As the SDL involves two separate development consortia, it may be appropriate for WBC to take the lead.

Yours sincerely,

Judith Neuhofer
Clerk to Barkham Parish Council

Comments on Original Application Submission (November 2014)



Barkham Parish Council

*Small Oaks
Doles Lane
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG41 4EB*

*Telephone / Fax
E-mail*

*0118 977 2857
clerk@barkham-parishcouncil.org.uk*

Mr. M. Melville
Development Control
Wokingham Borough Council

5th December 2014

Dear Matthew,

Barkham Parish Council Comments on Planning Applications

- **O/2014/2280 Arborfield Garrison Landowners Consortium (AGLC)**
- **O/2014/2179 Marino Family Trust (MFT)**

Barkham Parish Council Position Statement

Barkham Parish Council (BPC) objects to both the above applications, on the grounds that the Transport Assessments are based on unrealistic assumptions. As a consequence, future traffic levels are significantly underestimated. This in turn means that there is no credible transport plan for Barkham and the neighbouring parishes.

BPC is also very concerned about the layout and landscaping provisions on the edges of the AGLC development, which fail to create the “soft edge” envisaged for the SDL.

It is a considerable disappointment that we are in this position, especially as a lot of effort has been expended developing a good working relationship with the applicants. They have undoubtedly been appraised of the critical issues and we would have hoped that more creative solutions might have been offered. The most benign interpretation is that the planning applications are intended as negotiating positions by the applicants.

The pressure is therefore on Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) to treat these applications with rigour, ensuring that the applicants make firm commitments to deliver the necessary infrastructure and design improvements.

General Comments

The applications contain proposals to develop the Arborfield Garrison Special Development Location (SDL) identified in Wokingham Borough Council’s Core Strategy. Application O/2014/2280 by the Arborfield Land Owners Consortium covers land over which more than 80% is within the Parish of Barkham. Along with application O/2014/2179, which covers an adjacent site, both these applications will have an enormous impact on ALL residents of Barkham. Besides the other issues raised below, the biggest concern will inevitably be traffic congestion.

The planning applications are outline, except in certain limited respects. There is consequently a need to distinguish between what are aspirations and what are firm commitments by the developers. For example, both

developers espouse “Garden Village Principles” something that BPC undoubtedly supports. However the applications are not precise about what actually these principles mean.

It is essential that both applicants make some specific proposals as to what is meant by Garden Village Principles and that they commit what precisely will be delivered within this context. Specifically the applicants should demonstrate how these principles will be applied within their respective sites

The following are priority issues for BPC:

Highways

- Langley Common Road/Biggs Lane/A327 junctions
- Barkham Bridge and consequential impact on Barkham Road junctions with Barkham Street and Bearwood Road junction
- Commonfield Lane junction and status of Commonfield Lane itself
- A long term plan is required so that the vast majority of SDL traffic can use primary routes to reach key destinations, thus avoiding overload on residential roads such as Barkham Road.

Other items

- Greenways – how do they link the SDL to local communities.
- “Soft edge” to SDL, especially adjacent to Langley Common Road and Commonfield Lane.

Transport Assessment

It is inescapable that there will be yet more traffic on our local roads. It has to be questioned whether the traffic forecasts are entirely realistic. When the construction of 3,500 homes is complete, it can be conservatively estimated that approaching 2,000 additional peak hour journeys will be generated. Hopefully the proposed Arborfield bypass will absorb a large share of this traffic, but it is still likely that 10 to 20% of these extra journeys could be through Barkham. That would mean an additional 400 vehicles travelling along Barkham Road in the peak hours; this compares with a current peak hour flow of around 1,500 (both directions combined). It will become increasingly difficult for anyone wanting to turn out of junctions such as at Sandy Lane, Doles Lane and the Junipers or for residents along the main roads emerging from their own driveways.

The following anecdote from a resident who lives near the Barkham Road/Bearwood Road roundabout typifies the difficulties being encountered locally.

“Although I rarely try and exit our driveway onto Barkham at peak times, I did note at about 8.00 a.m. one day last week when I did go out, that there was a constant flow of traffic in both directions and it took me no less than about 4 minutes to turn right on to Barkham Road, and that was only once a driver coming up the hill kindly stopped to let me out. I know other neighbouring residents, especially those living close to the roundabout often experience similar problems when emerging from their driveways, and have to contend with vehicles coming from 3 directions. Firstly, those flying across the roundabout going towards the Bull, secondly those coming from Bearwood Road who turn right, together with a stream of vehicles flowing in the other direction. With the roundabout on the brow of a hill and being quite close to several driveways, the sight lines are not particularly good, hence the increased difficulty in getting out.”

Note that this anecdote referred to a date before the recent road closures in Barkham Ride and at Barkham Road level crossing, which have lead additional traffic being diverted through the area.

It is fortunate that the Arborfield relief road is now planned and the main entry point will be on to the A327. The transport consultants have adopted a strategy to encourage traffic on to this main route and that is also welcomed. However more needs to be done so that the vast majority of SDL traffic actually uses the relief road and so that increases on residential roads are marginal.

In theory, traffic increases will be contained by the “internalisation” of journeys, for example using the development’s own shops and schools, thus eliminating longer trips to reach equivalent facilities in Wokingham

and elsewhere. Unfortunately the Transport Assessments are not providing a realistic assessment of the amount of internalisation; for example

- AGLC propose that all educational journeys will be within the SDL while MFT propose the same for secondary schools – in the modern world, where educational choice is encouraged, within the state sector this just cannot be true. Additionally, in a development expected to contain a significant proportion of high value houses, it is inevitable that many children will travel to private schools located elsewhere.
- Residential trip rates of 0.53 are used by both applications. This number has been seized upon, presumably on some technical cum procedural basis. However it confuses planning precedent with reality – the reality is that trip rates in a location remote from main business centres and with rudimentary public transport will produce much higher rates. A survey carried out by the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan Transport Group ascertained that Penrose Park, with a similar housing mix, is generating 0.77, While internalisation should increase in the new developments, it is unlikely to reduce trip rates by a third as suggested.

WBC should require AGLC and MFT to produce more realistic Transport Assessments.

WBC should require AGLC and MFT to produce plain language summaries of their traffic assumptions, so that the community can really understand the implications of what is proposed.

Attachments 1 and 2 show critiques produced by the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan Transport Group.

Road improvements beyond local area

Planning for road improvements beyond the immediate area need to be addressed. WBC should lead on this issue, with plans going beyond 2026 if necessary. For example reopening of the Cutbush Lane, with its bridge over the M4, could provide a direct link from the Garrison to Loddon Bridge. This could be achieved in conjunction with improvements in Lower Earley Way, which eventually will have to be implemented. This would reduce pressure on the Black Boy roundabout, would create a shorter route from the Arborfield Relief Roads to reach Winnersh Triangle and to join the M4 eastbound. The current proposals to develop the M4 as a “smart motorway” could allow some opportunities for improving the access routes in this corridor.

A long term transport strategy needs to be developed by WBC to ensure that traffic from all major developments can access the primary road network to reach a range of destinations and the M4, without the requirement to use residential roads such as Langley Common Road, Barkham Road, Barkham Street and Bearwood Road (and elsewhere across the Borough).

Even if WBC does not spend a single penny in the next few years on this kind of proposal, it is essential that potentially useful corridors are protected for future transport needs.

Local Road Network

The local network is already heavily congested at peak times, with the peak period progressively stretching beyond a critical hour in the morning and evening. As a result, queues regularly occur at a number of points including Barkham Bridge, the Barkham Street and Bearwood Road junctions. Leaving Barkham, peak time queues are also encountered at Sindlesham, Winnersh and along Barkham Road towards Molly Millars Lane. Much of this traffic is caused by through traffic, for example residents of the western parts of Finchampstead have to pass through Barkham to reach the M4.

It is assumed that the development will yield a limited pot of money to improve the road network. It is the challenge for WBC to ensure that this money is spent with the best overall benefit while avoiding the trap of solving one problem, e.g. Barkham Bridge, only to worsen another problem, e.g. Barkham Street.

BPC would like to be involved in any discussions about proposals, either by the applicants or WBC to resolve the critical bottlenecks described in the next few paragraphs.

Road layout: A327/Biggs Lane/Langley Common Road area

Barkham Parish Council have long argued that the road layout of the north end of the development, where Biggs Lane meets Langley Common Road and further links to the A327, will be a crucial part of the transport plan. The layout proposed by AGLC proposes a new roundabout at the Biggs Lane junction, accompanied by a sharp turn into Langley Common Road: this is an attempt to discourage the use of Langley Common Road as a through route. This is a positive goal, but it is questionable whether it will be achieved by the proposed layout. As there will be three roundabouts to get from Biggs Lane to the start of the bypass, this will hardly encourage traffic heading towards the M4 eastbound to take the bypass – more likely they will come via Langley Common Road and eventually to Bearwood Road. There has to be a better solution, for example by eliminating at least one of the roundabouts, and making a left turn from Biggs Lane into Langley Common Road a more attractive proposition than taking a right turn at this point. This could, for example, be achieved either by retaining the existing T-junction, or by traffic lights at this junction.

WBC, in conjunction with the AGLC and MFT, must investigate the possibilities of designing a more effective layout in this area, which should be designed to attract as much SDL traffic, and indeed other local traffic too, on to the new relief road. It should be a clear goal to limit the amount of SDL traffic using Langley Common Road and to encourage SDL traffic to use the proposed new roundabout on the A327 south of Poppyfields as the preferred access point.

Suggestions include:

- Retaining the Biggs Lane as a T junction, as it is currently. At least this solution is cheap!
- Retaining the Biggs Lane as a T junction, but with traffic lights. Note that traffic lights may have to be introduced at this locality to ensure a safe crossing for pedestrian in lieu of the current subway. However traffic lights are not popular with local residents as they are perceived as having an urbanising effect.
- Using Baird Road as the feeder road from Biggs Lane, thus closing the Biggs Lane/Langley Common road junction completely. Making use of Baird Road brings traffic close to housing in Baird Road, but it has to be recognised that everyone in the existing community is going to experience some disadvantage: there seems no good reason for these houses to be made an exception. It does have the advantage of putting the northern gateway direct onto an A-road rather than an unclassified road.
- Replacing the Langley Common Road roundabout with a T junction (Eversley Road towards Arborfield Cross being treated as the minor road.), so as to improve access from Biggs Lane direct to the Arborfield Relief Road. This would also be beneficial to Arborfield Cross as drivers would not be encouraged to route through the village.
- Providing access to Penrose Park at the new roundabout at the southern end of the Arborfield Relief Road in lieu of the existing access point at the Langley Common Road roundabout.
- Providing traffic calming in Biggs Lane south of Venning Road, in order to make Biggs Lane a less attractive exit from the SDL. The traffic calming would happen to be near the proposed primary school, however it should be of a design that can allow frequent bus movements.
- Reverting the Langley Common Road/A327 junction to a T junction, creating a direct link from Biggs Lane to the Arborfield Relief Road

Various combinations of the above should also be considered. Each of these ideas could help to channel traffic towards the relief road, though none of them in isolation is perfect. The trick may well be to prioritise road junctions within the SDL so that traffic is encouraged to use the new roundabout on the A327 as their preferred access point.

Barkham Bridge

Barkham Bridge will be controversial. There is strong support in many quarters for widening or dualling the bridge. While this should undoubtedly improve safety, it would encourage yet more traffic to use Langley

Common Road and hence to travel through Barkham. This will have knock on effects at the Barkham Road/Barkham Street junction.

AGLC have proposed new road markings and a special surface to slow traffic heading west towards the bridge. This could improve safety and help traffic flow.

Removing the priority system altogether has been suggested. It is claimed that the current priority system has worsened safety. Combined with new road markings on both sides of the bridge, this could be a way forward.

WBC should ask AGLC if they can show any examples where this sort of solution has worked successfully elsewhere.

BPC also believes more assertive warning signs are required.

Road layout: Commonfield Lane/Barkham Street/Barkham Ride junction

The AGLC proposal for the Commonfield Lane/Barkham Street/Barkham Ride junction seems distinctly odd. AGLC have proposed changing the priorities so that Commonfield Lane would have priority and that traffic from the Finchampstead direction would have to give way. At the same time no significant improvement to Commonfield Lane is suggested. As a consequence drivers travelling southbound will head through the junction, believing that they are on the main road and then suddenly find themselves in a narrow lane with muddy verges masquerading as passing places. This does not seem like a good idea.

It is also a problem that the nearby sections of road are impossible to be used in safety by pedestrians, cyclists or horse riders. Barkham Street and Barkham Ride are too narrow, have minimal verges and extremely poor sightlines. Meanwhile bridleway BA11 and footpath BA8 from Barkham Church has been rendered unusable as they terminate at points on the main road where it is impossible to cross. In different circumstance BA11 could provide part of a new greenway running from the SDL towards Barkham and Wokingham.

The possibility of widening Commonfield Lane should be investigated, along with provision of a separate bridleway. It should be noted that part of the west side of the lane is in AGLC ownership while the east side is owned by WBC, albeit leased out to a local farmer.

Some years ago, the local landowner proposed ceding a parcel of land to allow the road to be realigned further away from his house. At the time WBC did not have funds available to progress this idea. With development of the SDL now imminent, it would appear to be a golden opportunity to resurrect this idea, along with improvements to Commonfield Lane. This would afford a number of advantages:

- The junction would be safer
- It creates new routing options out of the SDL, possibly reducing pressure on Barkham Bridge
- It would assist in the creation of a greenway from the SDL towards Barkham and Wokingham.

A diagram showing proposed changes to Commonfield Lane is shown in Attachment 3

WBC should investigate the practical implications of improving the Commonfield Lane/ Barkham Street/Barkham Ride junction as suggested.

Additionally WBC should ask AGLC to demonstrate the traffic modelling impact of improvements to Commonfield Lane, widening it for two way traffic for its whole length.

Road layout: Barkham Road/Barkham Street junction

The Barkham Road/Barkham street junction already generates considerable queues at peak times. In the morning peak the queue in Barkham Street typically extends all the way back to the bridge over the Barkham Brook. Meanwhile queues have been observed on occasions tailing back from the Bull all the way to Barkham Bridge. Given the confined road boundaries and proximity of listed structures at the Barkham Street junction, major improvements to the road layout are virtually impossible. It is likely that any improvements in traffic flow elsewhere on the network will only result in contributing to even greater queues at this junction.

A proposal that ought to be considered is to site a pedestrian crossing across Barkham Road outside the Bull. This would make access to the Bull safer, and also allow residents of Barkham Street to reach the bus stop in safety. Also minor improvement to the sight line emerging from Barkham Street might be possible.

WBC need to be satisfied that forecasts for traffic at this junction are realistic and to establish the capacity limit of the existing roundabout.

WBC also need to investigate what minor improvements can be implemented, such as installing a pedestrian crossing, as suggested above, and whether sight lines can be improved for traffic emerging from Barkham Street.

Road layout: Barkham Road/Bearwood Road junction

The Bearwood Road junction currently works quite well, but it is difficult to imagine how it will absorb the anticipated increase in traffic. One of the main problems is that traffic turning right out of Bearwood Road has to act with extreme caution because of fast moving traffic coming up Coppid Hill from the direction of the Bull. It is therefore disappointing not to see in the AGLC Plans any attempt to slow down the traffic coming up the hill, which would help to ease such congestion. At one of BPC's meetings with AGLC, they did show a drawing proposing a remedy for this, with a pinch point on Barkham Road about 100-150 yards before the roundabout to slow down the traffic. At the time, the consensus was that this would be an excellent idea.

Quite clearly AGLC are already aware of the steady volume of traffic at this junction at peak periods, which will only get worse over time, otherwise they would not have proposed any road improvements in that vicinity, it is therefore a mystery why this proposal has not been taken forward into the current planning application.

WBC need to be satisfied that forecasts for traffic at this junction are realistic and to establish the capacity limit of the existing roundabout.

WBC also need to investigate what minor improvements can be implemented, in particular to install some form of traffic calming for traffic approaching up Coppid Hill.

Bus Services

There is a proposal that bus services could operate to Wokingham up to every 20 minutes, but it is worded only as an aspiration. This is encouraging, but not specific.

To reduce car usage in the area, bus services have to meet a level of critical mass, both in terms of frequency and range of destinations – a half hearted operation will neither be effective in reducing car transport nor be viable for the bus operator.

A suggested network should comprise a twice hourly service from Reading via the SDL and direct to Wokingham plus another twice hourly service from Reading via the SDL to Finchampstead and Bracknell. This would provide the opportunity, to provide a variety of travel options particularly for educational and shopping purposes. It would also include vital links to the local railway stations.

WBC should require AGLC and MFT to make a firm commitment to support bus routes serving the Garrison. As a bare minimum should be a twice hourly direct bus to Wokingham, connecting with Waterloo trains, should be guaranteed.

Greenways

The application makes aspirational statements about greenways linking the development to local communities including Barkham, but there are no firm plans, as far as can be seen. Greenways for walking, cycling and horse riding are much needed for leisure purposes as local roads have become too busy to use safely. In addition, with the new secondary school opening in 2016, provision of all weather off road cycle ways could help achieve some reduction in peak hour traffic.

Cycling to school and commuting can contribute to a reduction in car usage. However for this to be practical, off road cycleways are necessary. On road cycling is not safe and anyway will cause a significant reduction in capacity because local roads are far too narrow to permit overtaking.

WBC should require AGLC and MFT to make a firm commitment to fund greenways outside the development area.

It is not clear whether there are sufficient greenways within the development, for example to facilitate linkages between the AGLC and MFT parts of the site. Also it is not clear whether the proposed corridors are wide enough to include adequate landscaping as well as mixed use greenways for cycling, walking and riding. Note that within the built up area, usage should be considerable and it will be necessary to allow generous widths to permit a degree of segregation by mode and direction.

WBC must ensure that the developers provide a comprehensive network of greenways within the SDL, and that the corridors are of sufficient width.

Specific plans are required to connect the SDL with neighbouring communities, i.e. Arborfield Cross, Barkham and Finchampstead.

The Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan has identified the following priorities which need to be provided in an around the SDL:

Cycleways are required, primarily to provide safe routes to school as well as to facilitate short distance commuting:.

- **SDL-Arborfield Cross**
- **SDL-Shinfield via relief road**
- **SDL-Barkham via Commonfield Lane, BA11, BA10**
- **SDL- Barkham Ride via BA14**
- **SDL-Finchampstead via Nine Mile Ride**

In addition a greenway including equestrian access from Poppyfields roundabout to BA14 through the SDL is required. Safe crossing points on busy roads, including Barkham Road, Barkham Street, Barkham Ride, Langley Common Road, Commonfield Lane and Edneys Hill will be required.

Open spaces

The proposal appears to show a number of fragmented SANGs linked by much narrower green corridors than were envisaged in the JTP plan. This appears to contradict the claimed ecological credentials for the development.

Retention of trees.

AGLC have committed to retaining the best trees within the development area, but a large number will nevertheless be removed.

BPC believes that AGLC and MFT should commit to provide one additional tree for every one that is felled.

Can the developers confirm how many of the 3500 trees identified in the tree survey will be removed and where those trees are.

Landscaping along Langley Common Road.

Landscaping around the periphery has also become a problem. WBC's original masterplan for the Garrison development proposed a "soft edge" to the development. This needs to be revisited: for example there should be a landscape buffer along Langley Common Road. Though this land will be the last to be developed, there is ample opportunity to establish hedging and trees that will mature. This will be good for the local community, it will be good for the eventual occupants of the nearby houses and it will be good for the developers as it will improve the value of these houses.

WBC should require AGLC to provide specific plans for landscaping on the south side of Langley Common Road. They also need to advise how the vacant land will be managed.

The area adjacent to Langley Common Road is likely to remain unoccupied for many years until development of this area starts. There should be a commitment from the developers and a delivery plan to show exactly what buildings will be retained till the time of development and potential temporary uses for retained buildings, as well as plans for security and temporary landscaping.

WBC must ask AGLC to provide a plan to show how will the vacant land be managed.

Housing near Commonfield Lane

Juxtaposition of housing to Commonfield Lane urbanises what is supposed to be a country lane. This could easily be resolved by changing shape of the neighbouring open space so that it is longer and narrower, as was shown in earlier versions of the plans.

At the very least, a strip of land needs to be protected to allow for a greenway along Commonfield Lane.

WBC should require AGLC to look again at providing a landscaped open space adjacent to Commonfield Lane.

Building height at village edge

The plans show some of the zones on the edge of the development with building up to three storeys high. This includes the area adjacent to Langley Common Road.

In the interests of creating a “soft edge”, buildings on the extremity of the development should not be more than two storeys high.

Heritage

Langley House is proposed for demolition. For many years this red brick building has been allowed to decay, languishing behind a barbed wire fence along Langley Common Road. It could be renovated as housing (perhaps with removal of some of the later additions) and it could become a local landmark for traffic approaching from Wokingham. This would also create an opportunity to provide a small number of extra housing units on a piece of land that would otherwise have to be set aside as a landscape area.

WBC should ask AGLC to prepare a feasibility study to restore Langley House for residential use.

The Infirmary Stables are to be retained as a central part of the wider community and is of national importance. Some outline plans have been suggested, which is welcomed.

A specific plan is required for Infirmary Stables.

Water Tower is to be demolished. BPC agrees with this, not least as it will avoid future management and safety issues and any maintenance costs that will arise.

Housing

WBC must consider the following questions.

- **Are types of housing appropriate, e.g. should there be provision of sheltered housing and other units specifically to cater for older people?**
- **Is density too high, e.g. in northern sector?**
- **Are density reductions in density in other areas causing unacceptable reduction of public open space?**

BPC supports the creation of character areas for housing and the setting of housing numbers up to limits.

Secondary Schools

The site selected is already vacant land, allowing construction to start soonest. It has the advantage of being next door to the existing military gymnasium – see below. However it is not served by the current public roads.

WBC must ensure that AGLC commits to improving the access roads inside what is currently a military zone.

WBC must ensure that a safe cycleway is provided from Barkham, as well as cycleways from other communities.

Will the nearby gymnasium be used by the school? Will it be available for public use? Who will manage this facility?

Amenities

The proposal appears to remove the existing community centre which we had previously been told would be retained. The developers need to advise what alternative provision will be made for a community facility which local opinion polling showed was a high priority for residents in the area.

It appears that the existing community centre in the Garrison will be demolished. Previous advice was that it would be retained. The developers need to confirm what alternative provision will be made for a community facility: it is recognised that a new and enlarged community centre will only be viable once the development is well under way, but indicative plans and dates are required, along with confirmation that the existing centre will be retained for the time being.

WBC should require AGLC to provide specific plans to replace the existing Arborfield Garrison Community Centre with a new centre.

The proposal appears to remove the existing church car parking area with no alternative car parking provision.

AGLC need to advise how they envisage car parking for the church will be accommodated without inconveniencing local people.

The adjacent cricket field and pavilion is being retained as is the current sergeant's mess and all of these will require car park provision. The only current provision for the cricket field is the possible use of the church car park (discouraged at the moment by the military). This car park also used to be useful to allow an informal park and ride facility in conjunction with the nearby bus stop.

Do AGLC propose an alternative site for car parking?

Doctors and medical facilities. There was strong feedback in local opinion polling that there is a need for services (medical etc.) within the development, can the developers confirm what has been planned in the village centre?

It is indicated that medical facilities will be provided, but clarification is sought as to where and when.

Retail

There was strong feedback during the consultation carried out by JTP that the village centre should contain a store of a size suitable to cover the development but not to become a destination store – can the developers confirm what is envisaged? Previous plans included neighbourhood centres (retail provision) as well as a district centre. Current planning appears to centralise all retail and services provision in a village centre. What impact do the developers expect this to have on car movements within the site?

Would two smaller ones be better than one large one, to avoid SDL becoming destination? Also this would offer choice and avoid creation of a local monopoly.

Village Centre

There is insufficient detail on the plan of the village centre. The previous application was criticised for an urbanising effect from the proposed district centre, the current massing appears to more of a town centre than a village centre profile

Employment Area

The existing Hogwood Farm industrial area will be expanded. It is not clear what sort of businesses are anticipated to arise in the expanded employment area, and what traffic generation will result from this.

WBC must ensure that conditions are implemented to determine that heavy goods vehicles access the area via the A327, and not via residential roads.

Flooding

The SDL is to be built on land which is mainly London clay. This means that the terrain has very poor permeability, and consequently drainage will be a major concern. The various authorities concerned, including the Environment Agency, have a big responsibility that proposals do not worsen flooding in downstream areas along the Loddon and the Thames itself.

The developers themselves have to recognise that they have a vested interest in a well managed drainage scheme: if the area earns a poor reputation for flooding, this in turn will cause difficulties in obtaining satisfactory and affordable insurance for the properties. If this happens, then the developers will face great difficulty selling later phases of the development.

WBC must be satisfied that the developers submit a satisfactory plan, including proposals for a future management plan for all aspects of drainage including SUDS, drainage channels and water retention ponds.

Sewerage Upgrade and other utilities

As has been pointed out many times previously, there needs to be a major upgrade in the sewage works. Thames Water has indicated to BPC that this can be accommodated within a reasonable timeframe and within the existing site at Wood Lane.

WBC need to confirm that a satisfactory plan is indeed in place, along with the provision of other utilities including water supply, electricity and, gas. Telecommunication arrangements should include high speed broadband for the SDL and neighbouring communities.

Phasing

The Planning Inspector's report of 2009, following the Core Strategy Examination in Public referred to the need to a limit of 750 housing units to be delivered pending delivery of road improvements to relieve Arborfield Cross.

“Capacity on the A327 is a current problem but the Council's modelling shows that 750 homes could be built before improvements to Arborfield Cross junction or new by pass are needed. The infrastructure requirements in CS# A7.7 refer to two links from Nine Mile Ride to the A327 and a number of possible measures to providing increased capacity along the A327, subject to further modelling. From the transport evidence presented at the hearings I see no overriding reason why a solution should not be worked up as part of the master planning process and any necessary and proportionate funding secured through a Section 106 agreement when planning permission is sought.”

WBC should confirm that the 750 limit will still apply.

Site access for HGVs during construction must be via prescribed routes, with constraints also on movements at peak times.

WBC must ensure site access rules are applied, restricting access to the A327 and specifying permitted operating periods.

Village Design Statement

The Barkham Village Design Statement (VDS) was adopted in 2007. The main concept in the VDS is that houses should sit in the landscape. The VDS is not mentioned in the applications but it is still considered important by BPC. This is particularly important in relation to the settlement edge – see above re landscaping near Langley Common Road and Commonfield Lane. Also there is a specific section in the VDS re the Garrison, in particular relating to brick and roof colours.

WBC must confirm that the VDS still applies as a Supplementary Planning Document. It should be acknowledged in the design of the development.

Community Name

Proposals for naming the area are unclear: the MFT application refers to Hogwood Garden Village while the AGLC application still refers to Arborfield Garrison SDL. BPC assumes that the whole SDL will have shared name, that reflects the history of the area.

WBC must confirm that there will be a consultation process before any name is finalised.

Barkham Parish Council
5 December 2014

Attachment 1

Paper by Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan Transport Group

AGLC Proposals

Review of Transport Assessment – ref AGLC/HPA/DOC/9, October 2014

Overview

The Transport Assessment is presented in the usual sequence – policy, existing situation, development proposals, promotion of sustainable transport, traffic impact, phasing.

Traffic impact is dealt with initially only as a function of the AGLC proposals – no Marino development and no bypass. Subsequent sections look at the impact of the bypass on the initial findings, then go on to add in the Marino development.

Disappointingly this TA suffers from many of the key deficiencies of the last one, especially in relation to traffic growth, trip generation rates, and assumptions about internalisation of journeys. Consequently, it seriously underestimates the external traffic generation of the SDL, and the impacts that it will have on the surrounding road network.

Sustainable Transport

There are many throw-away comments about providing opportunities to travel by sustainable modes. In 3.5.7 we learn that the site has access to frequent rail services at Reading station. No mention of the 40 minute bus journey that is required to get there, or to the fact that car journeys to the station are not at all sustainable in the local area. Similarly for Wokingham station, without mention of the lack of facilities for sustainable transport to the station, or to the lengthy journey time to London.

Road Safety

Despite an analysis of the accident data for the study area, it is concluded that there is no evidence of any significant highway safety problems on the network. This is at odds with the evidence – Barkham Bridge and Arborfield Cross roundabout are known road safety issues.

Traffic Data

New surveys carried out in 2014, it would appear in the hope that a reduction in traffic flows from 2010 could be established. The total flow at the Bull roundabout in the morning peak was recorded as about 70 vehicles less than in 2010, or about 3%. DfT guidance on the accuracy of manual classified counts is that recording errors may amount to 10%, so no change in real terms. Given that the level of activity at the Garrison is in decline, we may have had some underlying traffic growth.

Traffic Growth

Estimates of future traffic growth are examined from a couple of sources – TEMPRO, which is a DfT application estimating the growth in trips by area, and WSTM3 – the Wokingham traffic model.

WSTM3 shows growth as follows:

- 2010 to 2026 (no SDLs) = 11.6%, all of which happens after 2017
- 2010 to 2026 (inc SDLs) = 33.1%

The TA applies a ‘methodology’ that moves the base of the 11.6% forward to 2014, then adds in an allowance for the Shinfield SDL, this being assumed to be the only SDL that contributes traffic locally. The result is:

- 2014 to 2026 (everything except AG SDL) = 8.4%

Clearly, something has gone awry in the calculations, and if we take the 11.6% as a starting point, the growth attributable to everything except the AG SDL should be nearer to 19%.

Traffic Generation

Residential trips rates of 0.53 per household based on what is in WSTM3. Penrose Park, which has a similar housing mix, is generating at 0.77, some 45% over the rate used, so it is difficult to see how 0.53 can be anywhere near right, bearing in mind that internalisation of journeys is dealt with separately, whatever the 'smarter travel choices' made in the future. It's not as if there will be any smarter options to choose from.

This is fundamental to the entire TA. Not only will a higher trip rate attribute more trips to the residential development, it will result in a disproportionately greater increase in those appearing on the external road network, because the number that can be internalised is limited by, for example, the number of school places.

An increase in 0.1 trips per household would increase generated traffic by almost 19%, and the external effect by even more.

Internalisation of New Journeys

The residential trips are disaggregated by journey purpose, and matched with other land uses on site. For example, departing residential-to-education trips are matched with education trip arrivals at schools.

However, the calculations assume that all education trips being made from within the SDL will go to schools on site. The remaining education arrivals are assumed to come in from outside.

This is not only clearly wrong (parental choice, private schools, current placements - WSTM3 assumes that 50% of education trips will go to schools on site), but has a compound effect on the external traffic forecast. Every trip that is assumed, incorrectly, to end up at a school on site must instead be added to the external network. In addition, the 'empty' trip end at the school on site will then be satisfied by another trip arriving at the school from outside, and probably leaving as well. Thus one education trip incorrectly 'internalised' will be replaced by 2, possibly 3 trips on the external network.

Just taking the AGLC development, there are 272 morning peak hour two-way trips generated for education purposes. This means a total of 272 journeys in one direction or the other. Half of these have been incorrectly internalised, so we get an additional 136 external trips either out or back. To this, we must add another 136 trips either back or out, made by people filling the education arrivals from outside. Result – add 272 trips to the forecast of external traffic.

The same mistake has been made with the other journey purposes (employment excluded), although the numbers involved are smaller.

Internalisation of Existing Journeys

935 privately and MoD-owned homes said to be on the Arborfield Garrison site, from which education and retail trips are assumed to be travelling off-site now, but which are assumed to be wholly internalised in the future. Result – 152 trips removed from the forecast. Error – half will continue to leave the site – add 76 back in.

There is, however, no allowance made for future commuting by occupants of MoD homes who currently work on the Garrison but who, in the future, will clearly have to travel somewhere else.

Removal of Military Traffic

This is a constant in all TAs where there is an existing development being replaced. The logic is that traffic generated to the same level as the existing development has no material impact – it simply replaces what is already on the network. That's ok up to a point, except that there are issues of tidality also to consider here.

Leaving that aside, the main issue is that Crest are claiming 'relief' up to the level of military traffic recorded in 2010, which was higher than it is now. The 'logic' is that this could return at any time (they would have claimed an earlier year but have found no records).

This should be dismissed. The reality is that the missing military traffic will have been replaced by other traffic in what is, essentially, a capacity-constrained situation. Previous levels of military traffic could not now be borne on the external network, so relief at this level cannot be claimed. In any event, the MoD will be leaving Arborfield, at which point there will be no military traffic to subtract.

Operational Assessments

It is difficult to take these seriously, given the problems with the traffic forecasts:

- Background (everything but AG SDL) traffic growth of 8.4% should be nearer 19%
- At least 348 trips incorrectly internalised (equivalent to 47% of their claimed external traffic generation)
- Removal of too much military traffic – add back in 125 trips

The result of this is that total traffic forecasts will be underestimated, the extent of which will be a function of what proportion the development traffic is of the total. Where development traffic is, say 15% of the total, the overall error would be around 20%. Add this sort of increase into many of the operational assessments, particularly on the Barkham Road corridor and the Bull roundabout, and they all fail.

This conclusion is crucial because one of the purposes of the TA is to demonstrate that the AGLC development could go ahead on its own and in the absence of the Arborfield Relief Road. It also affects the argument about the number of houses in the full SDL that could be built before the bypass is open.

Arborfield Relief Road

The ARR is dealt with in a separate section in which the operational assessments of key junctions are repeated with fresh forecasts that take into account the effect of completing the bypass. The Bull roundabout and junctions on Barkham Road are said to improve, whilst the overload at California Crossroads reaches a new peak of 68% on one arm. Given that the figures used in the assessment are so badly flawed, the conclusions cannot be relied upon.

Adding in the MFT Development

Same methodology, same problems – growth too low, generation rates unrealistic, internalisation assumptions wrong. Operational problems loom even larger, even using the underestimated forecasts.

Mitigation

Given the lack of any decent public transport proposals or incentives, and the dearth of walking and cycling facilities surrounding the site, the contribution offered by sustainable (or active) travel will be very small. The framework travel plan contains nothing to contradict this.

Mitigation of the impact on the external highway network, aside from the Arborfield Relief Road (and what is the contribution towards this?) amounts to a couple of access junctions, some traffic calming, and claims that more capacity will be available because traffic will flow more evenly.

Conclusion

This Transport Assessment is some way short of forecasting the scale and extent of traffic impacts associated with the new development, and does not demonstrate how such impacts could be mitigated. It should be rejected.

Attachment 2

Paper by Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan Transport Group

Arborfield Garrison SDL

MFT site – Brief Note on TA

It is impossible to carry out a full review of this because several of the appendices are missing, crucially those dealing with traffic growth and trip generation. There are numerous references to agreements with WBC on technical aspects of the TA, almost all of which are missing. One of the appendices that is present is designed to refer to other documents, but something has gone wrong with the template and where document references should be there are only error statements.

However, based on what can be gleaned from the main document and other appendices:

- Residential trip rate 0.53
- Trips disaggregated by journey purpose for the internalisation calcs
- 83% of primary trips internalised
- All residential to secondary education trips contained within the wider SDL
- Traffic growth appears to have been arrived at on a corridor by corridor basis using comparisons between different runs of WSTM3. Given what we know about some of the problems with the model, it not surprising that some of the growths are negative. In some cases, overall growth factors have been arrived at by taking averages of the individual corridors – whether weighted or not is unclear.
- Trip distribution is rather odd – 21% to Wokingham, and a good slice going south. Reading is much smaller than we have been used to seeing.
- Adding the development in 2019 without ARR reduces some of the overloads at Arborfield Cross roundabout!
- The 2026 operational assessments all assume that ARR is in place
- Barkham Road corridor is identified as in need of mitigation, and an unspecified contribution is offered to an unspecified solution
- California Crossroads is identified as in need of mitigation, and an unspecified contribution is offered to an undetermined environmental improvement scheme
- No offer of contribution to Arborfield Relief Road
- Usual worthless drivel on travel plans, but no incentives and no public transport services proposed

Conclusion

This is an unacceptable TA, based on dubious assumptions and questionable methodologies. Even where the need for mitigation is identified, there are no proposals. It appears to have been produced in order to:

- Tick the box
- Minimise the infrastructure contribution

It should be rejected.

Attachment 3

Diagram showing suggested improvements in Commonfield Lane



Yours sincerely,

Judith Neuhofer
Clerk to Barkham Parish Council



Mr Matthew Melville
Development Management Officer
Wokingham Borough Council
PO Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham RG40 1WR

Comments on Amended Information (February 2015)

13th February 2015

Dear Matthew

Revised Planning application O/2014/2280 AGLC

We have now been through all of the AGLC application revisions, reference O/2014/2280 documentation and attached is the response of Finchampstead Parish Council to the application. In addition, our group of councillors who have specifically been studying the application are continuing to do so, and may submit further comments as they arise, which we have been told will be acceptable.

We have particularly highlighted comments on:

- Heritage
- SANGS
- Transport
- Character Areas

In addition we felt that one omission from the revisions was the provision of a nursery.

We found it difficult to find whether or not some of our earlier comments had been implemented in the new plans, so we attach our previous submission for reference.

Yours sincerely

Roland Cundy

Roland Cundy
Chairman, Finchampstead Parish Council
Encs : 2 comments documents.

Finchampstead Parish Council
Comments on Revised AGLC Planning Application O/2014/2280

Heritage

- There is mention of in the Executive Summary of ' a real opportunity to embrace and integrate the historical significance'. This point is not expanded, Finchampstead Parish Council would like to see a commitment made to do this.
- Existing horse stables, WBC should look at National Trust properties where stables have been converted into café/eateries.

SANGS

- Access issues for residents from Reading Rd, to West Court SANG are still valid. Carpark and access is still not addressed.

Transport

- Finchampstead Parish Council is pleased with the changes made to the Transport plan.
- There needs to be a roundabout at the junction leading to the secondary school, otherwise traffic will be halted due to lots of cars doing right turns into and out of the school road.

Character Areas

- Why are there no self-build homes included in the plans?
- There appears to only be one road leading to the village centre.

Nursery provision

- A nursery should be included in the plans.

Comments on Original Application Submission (November 2014)

Page 1

4th December 2014

Finchampstead Parish Council
Comments on AGLC Planning Application O/2014/2280

APPLICATION SUMMARY

- 3.3 The Indoor swimming pool is from non-AGLC s106 funds and will involve a separate planning application by WBC.
- 3.7 Garrison Church – what is the long term future ie after the garrison leaves the families will remain until houses are built elsewhere and will then leave, what becomes of the church, to whom will it be handed over to?
- 4.17 Natural England’s requirement for SANGS is due to a European Commission requirement. How will this requirement be affected in the event of the UK leaving the EU, does such land become available for development?

Concerned that the food-store may be so large that it attracts customers from outside the SDL.

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

1.2.2 + 2.1.4 – The cricket pitch is to be retained as land but should not the local population decide to what use this recreational area is put rather than the developer stating it is to remain as a cricket pitch?

P57 NMRE question – “we did” does not answer this.

4.3 The plan does not show the secondary school in the correct place.

4.3.3 Need to leave as a blank space – for WBC to put forward a detailed plan showing the layout.

4.3.5 The design needs to slow down traffic and dissuade through use to the Reading Road to NMR.

P75 No mention of self build plots.

P 77 Heights of properties. A significant amount are proposed to be 3 storeys, probably over-powering.

P92 The SANG needs to give access to the secondary school (including cycles) from California CP but also to be secure when necessary.

P97 Skate Park and BMX park but no outdoor bowls club – why 2 activities for youngsters and none for post adolescents – or will this be included the Outdoor Sport (Public Realm) section? Should the developer be specifying the outdoor recreational uses?

P100 Who monitors and maintains the SUDS and SWALES after the developer has left the site? Also while developer is on site will he carry out that function?

5.6.3 The latest evidence from Germany is to orientate roofs E-W to increase the time over which energy is collected rather than too much over a shorter period which overwhelms the local grid ability to take this.

- Who will take on the management and SANGS, green spaces, NEAP’s and LEAP’s? Keeping grass cut, trees pruned and equipment maintained.
- Access to ALL allotment’s. Will they be fenced and have car parking along with water supply? Who will start the associations – the developer?
- It appears that car parking is calculated over the whole development to give an average of two. Therefore there will be less than two for many of the properties. Concerned that this will lead to cars being parked on the roads.

SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

1.16 *Wokingham.*

7.8+ What happens to the need for a SANG if the UK leaves the EU?

Finchampstead Parish Council
Comments on AGLC Planning Application O/2014/2280

Finchampstead Parish Council
Comments on AGLC Planning Application O/2014/2280

- Which department in WBC is going to monitor on an ongoing basis what AGLC are going to do and that it has been done to either the proposal or the stated standard? “Ongoing” should be at least monthly or be on site for the whole development. AGLC state that there will be meters and displays in houses for electricity and gas, slow feed taps, garden composters, water butts, internal storage bins for recycling etc. Is there going to be a cupboard or lean to hide the rubbish and recycling bins?
- The proposal is littered with the word Vision. Which department in WBC is going to check that the Vision turns in to reality?

PLANNING STATEMENT

- Table 3.3. No mention of self-build plots.
- Bus service very important in making this development sustainable and existing service needs to be markedly improved. Cycle access also very important.

TRAFFIC ASSESSMENT AND APPENDICES

Traffic Modelling

In section 3.8.4 of the transport assessment (p30), I-Transport state the highest hourly morning flow is between 7:45-8:45am. They use this window in all of their analysis (Tables 6.18 through 6.81). This is not consistent with the Wokingham Strategic Transport Model (WSTM) which uses 8-9am. If the analysis highlights that the earlier time frame is indeed the peak flow time, then should not the WSTM be re-run also be using this time frame? In actual fact this may then identify further junctions that exceed the 10% increase rule in the Strategic Assessment.

Nine Mile Ride Extension

We await the further consultation with regards to the final route of NMRE and how it interacts with the village centre. How will this consultation be implemented? Who will control it?

Junction of Barkham Ride/Barkham Street and Commonfield Lane

We support the proposals with regard to changed priorities at the junction. We would ask if anything could be done to increase visibility approaching the new T-junction from Barkham Ride. Given that the garrison already own the land along the length of Commonfield Lane, we believe it should be upgraded to a two way road as this will alleviate traffic flow not only through California Crossroads but also across Barkham Bridge.

Junction of Barkham Road/Barkham Street (By the Bull)

We would recommend that the visibility approaching this junction from Barkham Street is improved. At the moment the existing mini-roundabout has a give way on this approach. In actual fact, due to the uncertain likelihood of Traffic approaching from the east, the majority of vehicles stop at the junction when most of the time they would be able to continue. This would help to reduce (but obviously not eliminate) traffic queues on this arm of the junction.

California Crossroads

- We generally support the suggested shared space solution put forward for the crossroads.
- With regard to the shared space implementation, we believe it is not possible to fully support this option without significant further consultations with local residents and the highway authority. How would these consultations be handled in practice? We feel that if we did proceed with this solution, it should be implemented sooner rather than later to allow the local population time to adjust to the new environment.
- Doc/9 7.3 page 111, error here? There are references to Barkham Road, Barkham Street and Common Field Road. Barkham Road needs to be changed to Barkham Ride.

Finchampstead Parish Council
Comments on AGLC Planning Application O/2014/2280

CONSTRUCTION ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Flooding and Surface Water Drainage

AGLC's submission contains a very large amount of information on this subject which shows they are very much aware of the significant measures they will need to take to minimise flooding risks to their proposed development and to areas near water courses downstream of their site. Sadly, we feel that, the sheer volume of this information makes it difficult to check and adequately understand for a reader who is not a drainage design engineer with full knowledge of modern national standards (SuDS).

Alarmingly there appears to have been no coordination with MFT's consultants and different design parameters have been used by AGLC for the basis of calculating peak storm flow rates. In particular AGLC have not taken into account any flows that may arise from the adjoining extreme Northern and North Eastern areas of the proposed MFT development in their calculations. Surface water run off from MFT's proposed development near the Hogwood Industrial Site and the end of the Nine Mile Ride evidently find its way into the drainage system for AGLC's development via the Robinson Crusoe Lake's overflow and a downstream culvert under Park Lane. **Both developers need to coordinate and resubmit their hydrographic modelling calculations so that they are based on whole existing catchment areas with previously agreed design assumptions and parameters which are consistent and acceptable to the EA.**

It is not clear whether there is sufficient allowance in AGLC's peak run off calculations for the impermeable nature of the underlying London Clay. We are concerned about how effective their proposed mitigating attenuation works will actually be when the surface soil structure becomes saturated and the swales/balancing ponds are full after a prolonged period of heavy rain.

Also for the purposes of quantifying the attenuation works that would be needed for their site, the MFT application contained calculations comparing the rates of existing and future 100 year unmitigated storm peak run off rates, including a 30% addition for the probable effects of future climate change. This showed that this type of future storm event could result in up to 6 times higher run off rates than at present. AGLC do not appear to have clearly illustrated this point with similar calculations in their application.

We are concerned about how AGLC's flood/drainage plan fits in with WBC's, particularly with regard to ensuring that the development called Poppies, off A327, does not flood again as it did in 2010/2011.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

Document consists mainly of copies of the questionnaires and general comments from people visiting the exhibitions. By far the most concern was about traffic and road issues, about 73%.

Major concerns over impact on local roads during construction. Many residents of Arborfield want the relief road to be constructed before the development starts.

Green spaces. Lots of complaints that existing Green Spaces are to be removed especially from residents of Geering Rd and Sheerlands Rd.

There is a YOU SAID. WE DID section. It shows how Crest Nicholson has responded to comments on the original plans eg new Transport Assessment, new Flood Survey.

Finchampstead Parish Council
Comments on AGLC Planning Application O/2014/2280

However other issues have been side-stepped, viz:

Inadequate Parking – answer ‘this complies with WBC standard’ (we know this is flawed – look at FBC Centre parking problems.)

NMRE is a major concern—answer ‘It is not a strategic route and will facilitate development of the SDL.’

Public transport – answer ‘We are in discussion with local bus operators eg 144’. Please note that the Reading Bus Leopard 3 service replaced the 144 many months ago.

Residents’ concerns re specific village by village roads and traffic issues are not included in the document. Developers say that they are engaged in detailed discussions with individual Parish Councils.

Has Thames Valley Police had any input in the plan? Ideally they should have been a part of the overall development layout for the proposal.

STATEMENT ON PROVISION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Within the Community centres are there going to be space for a pub and a Doctor’ Surgery?
- Can we ensure that WBC requires the developer to put artificial surfaces on any slopes or mounds in the NEAPs and LEAPs? This was a lesson learnt from the FBC play park: all the grassy mounds had their grass stripped off very quickly and they have now been covered in an artificial surface.
- It is stated that the MOD Gym is to be reused. We assume that this will be as a Gym but it’s not clear if that is the case. Assuming this is correct, the facility should be made available to the Public as soon as possible not left empty and un-used until the development reaches some arbitrary target. Secondly how will this facility be run and managed?

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

In Doc/11 there is reference to hedges. Will AGLC state that they will plant appropriate hedges etc to support native bird species . Also whether they are able to create habitats for birds that are on a significant decline due to loss of hedges and other habitats.

STATEMENT – EDUCATION PROVISION

2.11 Not a ‘relocated’ secondary school, rather a new one.

3.6 Cannot specify primary school as SoS may allow another education provider to use for other education purposes.

3.10 + 3.12 Land/area actually allows for more pupils than this – is dependent on size of the buildings actually constructed.

RETAIL STATEMENT

The retail statement is designed to show compliance with National Planning Policy Framework and WBC’s retail study, both of which require new “out of town “ retail developments to prove that their impact on the Main Town Centre (Wokingham) will be minimal in terms of viability and vitality.

In attempting to prove this minimal impact, the study makes some assumptions eg, that Wokingham’s Regeneration plans include a new supermarket in the Town Centre, which is by no means a done deal.

Finchampstead Parish Council
Comments on AGLC Planning Application O/2014/2280

Tesco on Finchampstead Rd would be hardest hit by the new store, followed by Waitrose in Rectory Rd, but this is glossed over by the document, which indicates that they are both 'overtrading', and could absorb any losses. There is no mention of the impact on Waitrose at Yateley, probably the nearest food-store to the development.

All the above show the predicated impact for 2017 (store opening) and also for 2022, the mid point of the development.

At 4,000sqm gross the new food-store planned for Arborfield is over the locally set size of 2,500sqm, but it will also house comparison goods, which apparently means Chemist, Florist etc.

There is also a mention of 'any Planning Permission should be conditional to enable other 'appropriate' use' - a bit vague.

At 4,000sq.m the store should be big enough for a family's weekly shop, thereby reducing traffic density on surrounding area. However, this could have a detrimental effect on Wokingham and its need to regenerate. If families from Arborfield do not do food shopping in the town they will probably not visit it at all.

The document is light on detail but is a thorough box-ticking exercise to show compliance with NPPF and WBC's Retail study.

HOUSING STRATEGY

Density rate appears to be appropriate, and a good mix of housing types. There is a need for affordable housing locally, and would prefer all of the 35% to be accommodated on site, and not offset this requirement against the Relief Road.

There is currently discussion in the Press about a proposal to set a minimum room size for houses in new developments. Will WBC adopt and enforce such a proposal?

Doc/14 actual page 7 = 12 of 19 shows that AGLC states there will be 2710 houses by 2026 but page 6, 4.2, shows 2000 houses by 2030.

STATEMENT OF PROVISION OF SANGS

- Northern SANG – It's not clear if access points to this SANG are to be provided for people not resident on the SDL site i.e. from the eastern boundary – they should be. A car-park should also be provided at this point.
- West Court SANG – It needs an additional pedestrian access point to give non-SDL residents from the Reading Road/Park Lane/New Mill Lane area, access.
- Japanese Knotweed has been identified in a number of areas across both SANG's. (App 13.11) – What control/removal actions are planned? None appear to be listed.
- P138 SANG management – needs to be council owned to prevent reverting back to AGLC at end of perpetuity period (80 years) or due to UK withdrawing from the EU.
- Lack of provision of bridleways in the SANGS.

HERITAGE STATEMENT

On the whole, Heritage issues have been sympathetically addressed.

The Moat House and the Horse Infirmary are to be retained as is the Church.

No mention of what will happen to West Court, which is technically outside the development.

Finchampstead Parish Council
Comments on AGLC Planning Application O/2014/2280

There is to be a full photographic survey and an archaeological standing buildings report.

Garrison gates. Originally 2 sets but one set has now been removed to the new garrison location. Plans to remove second set as well. Could they not remain, possibly in one of the communal areas, as a reminder of the history of the site?

Sergeants' Mess to be demolished. It is a very substantial building. Could it be retained for community use?

INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN

Road improvements and the secondary school are essential components to the success of this development, and it is hoped that this document will ensure that they are delivered in a timely manner as the SDL is built.

DRAFT HEADS OF TERMS /s106 OBLIGATIONS

5.2 1200 or 1500?

11.1 For the population to decide if this will remain as a cricket pitch – may wish to use for other recreational uses.

11th February 2015

Planning Department
Wokingham Borough Council
Shute End
Wokingham
Berks RG40 1WR

Comments on Amended Information (February 2015)

Attn: Matthew Melville

Dear Sir,

O/2014/2280 – Arborfield Garrison, Finchampstead

Outline permission for 2,000 dwellings, district centre, secondary school, primary school, sports and play areas, etc.

Full permission for SANGS and road improvements.

Swallowfield Parish Council has reviewed the additional information relating to this application and wishes to highlight increased concerns regarding highways and transport and the impact on traffic through Farley Hill and Swallowfield.

In other respects, our prior comments contained in our letter dated 19th November relating to both the Arborfield SDL applications still stand because they are not impacted by this new material and have yet to be addressed. I refer, in particular, to the Parish Council's concerns about flood attenuation and alleviation which require an holistic approach for the Loddon catchment. Please continue to take our earlier comments into account.

The latest traffic modelling is showing an alarming 20% increase in traffic through Church Road, Farley Hill. This is more than we had previously been led to believe. Whilst this is bad enough, it is still not clear whether the modelling has taken into account future developments that will draw additional traffic in an easterly and westerly direction through the parishes of Swallowfield or Shinfield including:

- a) the new Park & Ride at Mere oak
- b) future Green Park coach terminus
- c) future Green Park railway station (with links to Crossrail)
- d) school run for pupils attending the new secondary school in the Arborfield SDL.

Farley Hill already suffers from acute traffic flow problems caused by parents dropping off and collecting their children from Farley Hill Primary School and this situation already results in frequent gridlock at peak times and bad tempered exchanges between drivers. It is likely that much of the increase in traffic will occur at peak times.

Clearly some increase in traffic resulting from pupils attending the new secondary school from areas to the west including Swallowfield, Riseley and Spencers Wood is inevitable and possibly unavoidable, depending on public transport options given that there are none at

present. Swallowfield Parish Council emphasises that it is of course absolutely essential that this parish is included within the catchment for this school.

However, of greatest concern is traffic travelling to and from the M4 junction 11 which does not need to use the roads through Farley Hill and Swallowfield but will inevitably do so if traffic is slow moving or if queues develop on the preferred route(s) as can be expected despite improvements to the A327 north.

Whilst traffic calming measures along Church Road Farley Hill west of the A327 are helpful, they will not alleviate the bottleneck outside Farley Hill School which is already unacceptable. Any worsening of this situation will be disastrous and can only be resolved by appropriate forward planning that will ensure that other preferred routes provide good traffic flows with little queueing and are consequently more attractive to motorists.

Yours faithfully

Mrs. Elizabeth Halson
Swallowfield Parish Clerk

SWALLOWFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
PARISH OFFICE
SWALLOWFIELD STREET, SWALLOWFIELD
READING, BERKS, RG7 1QX
Tel: 0118 988 5929 email: clerk@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk

19 November 2014

Wokingham Borough Council
Shute End
Wokingham
Berks RG40 1WR

Attn: Matthew Melville

Comments on Original Application Submission (November 2014)

Dear Sir

O/2014/2179 - Hogwood Farm, Sheerlands Road, Finchampstead
Outline permission for 1,500 dwellings, general industrial uses, village centre etc
(Referred to as the Marino Family Trust or MFT application / development)

O/2014/2280 – Arborfield Garrison, Finchampstead
Outline permission for 2,000 dwellings, district centre, secondary school, primary school, sports and play areas, etc.
Full permission for SANGS and road improvements.
(Referred to as the Crest Nicholson application / development)

Swallowfield Parish Council (SPC) wishes to make the following comments regarding the above connected applications.

It is difficult to comment on such large scale proposals without touching on matters that are in the strictest sense peripheral to the applications themselves. However, these matters go hand in hand with the proposals and will be extremely important to the overall success or otherwise of the proposed development and therefore need to be addressed in conjunction with it.

SPC is pleased to see both the MFT application for the southern part and the Crest Nicholson application for the northern part of the Strategic Development Location (SDL) are now being handled in tandem. It is essential that these applications are viewed as a single overall development and that the two plans proceed in a coordinated fashion with all the necessary surrounding and enabling infrastructure in place ahead of the main development.

SPC has already commented on the wider infrastructure issues of the SDL development as a whole in response to the previous AGLC application for the northern part (O/2014/0600). Those comments are relevant to both applications but they are largely issues for Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) to resolve using funds from the developers and other sources. Those comments have not all been reiterated here because WBC already has them on the record. SPC is aware of the work undertaken on traffic modelling, progress on plans for the

Arborfield Cross Relief Road and changes made in the Crest Nicholson application in response to comments previously submitted but a number of concerns remain.

1. Flood Risk and Alleviation

a) Risk Assessment and flood attenuation system design and construction

SPC notes from the Flood Risk Assessment for the MFT development covering the southern part of the SDL that the majority of this large green field area drains into the River Blackwater. This is green field land and clearly the amount of impermeable surface area resulting from such a large scale development has the potential to vastly increase the rate and extent of surface water run-off unless appropriate attenuation measures (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)) are in place to limit this effect from the outset.

The water from the northern part of the SDL flows into the River Loddon downstream from Swallowfield which will limit its capacity to handle greater flows from further upstream and also has the potential to make matters worse.

Swallowfield sits at the confluence of the rivers Loddon and Blackwater. Flood events along the Blackwater Valley are characterised by flashy spate type events. Flood plains along the Blackwater within the parish boundaries are frequently in use and, when this occurs, surface water drainage backs up and in such cases floods properties and land.

While the proposed SUDS strategy is supported, inevitably there is significant erosion of the green field area. We would like to see a much more comprehensive infiltration study undertaken in relation to the MFT development. Through these techniques significant volumes of storm water should be reintroduced to the water table below the site and not transferred out with the development when the SUDS' capacities are exceeded.

Of real concern is the arrival of new peak flood flows within Swallowfield which is one of the first major flood plain areas these flows will reach below the points at which the scheme drains. Any net new flows will remove flood plain capacity, causing flooding to Swallowfield and downstream communities already at risk in the Loddon Valley such as Lower Earley.

A major concern exists in respect to transport during flood events. The A327 towards Reading crosses the River Loddon and in 2007 this road was impassable leading to traffic routing through Swallowfield which was itself flooded. Vehicles met blockages and floods throughout the parish of Swallowfield. While WBC is assisting SPC and the Swallowfield Flood Resilience Group with road drainage improvements, none of the proposed schemes will make these routes capable of dealing with traffic from the planned development.

The proposed Arborfield Relief Road resumes on the A327 before the existing bridge so again planners would appear to have shunted the issue away from the immediate vicinity of the developments but will significantly impact local communities proximate to the two schemes.

SPC is concerned that both the MFT and Crest Nicholson outline applications are only part of this larger plan for the Loddon catchment as a whole and cannot be viewed in isolation. The outline applications do not show where all the flood attenuation storage sites will be or how the overall solution will be achieved and need to take account of the larger picture.

SPC feels that a top down approach is needed whereby the overall scheme for the Loddon catchment is studied, designed and planned at a strategic level. This can then be used to inform decisions that might potentially affect the layout of the SDL development and hence the proposals contained in both the MFT and Crest Nicholson outline applications.

SPC seeks assurances that the detailed designs to be produced by the developers will be expertly and independently reviewed to ensure that they are indeed fit for purpose.

SPC also looks to WBC as lead flood authority to ensure that all drainage is adequately funded, built to an appropriate standard and fit for purpose to avoid a situation where additional works are required some years later as a result of floods occurring due to ill-conceived schemes.

b) Maintenance of flood alleviation assets

SPC has learnt from local experiences that maintenance of the flood alleviation assets years after the builders have left is crucial to their continued effectiveness. In this respect SPC trusts that WBC will secure sufficient funding to ensure their ongoing maintenance.

SPC would like to see details of the proposed on-going management plan to be adopted post-build. SPC also seeks confirmation that there is adequate funding to maintain critical drainage and flood prevention measures which are outside the development itself on which the development will rely. SPC would also like to see funding made available for an independent post development study to review whether the development has had a positive or negative impact on the risk of flooding in Swallowfield. We would suggest this takes place in perhaps 2020 and 2025.

2. Highways and Transport Infrastructure

The traffic modelling for the SDL suggests that a high proportion of journeys will be towards Reading. Traffic will be attracted to the forthcoming Park & Ride at Mere oak and the proposed future Green Park coach terminus and railway station (with links to Crossrail). The available east-west routes from the SDL towards Mere oak and the M4 J11 interchange are inadequate and will need radical improvement if rat-running is to be avoided through the country lanes of Farley Hill and Swallowfield.

More detail is required on the traffic calming measures to be put in place along Church Road Farley Hill west of the A327. It is most important that any scheme does not have an urbanising effect on this rural road but also we assert that this route is not suitable for heavier traffic flows due to narrowness, poor sightlines and the bridge by All Saints Church which is impassable for HGVs and is one way only. The scheme must also take account of the position of Farley Hill Primary School and not worsen the current congestion caused by school traffic along this road. A similar treatment will be needed to discourage traffic from using Swallowfield Road as it emerges from Arborfield Cross at its proposed junction with the Relief Road.

The transport assessment for the MFT application states that the A327 operates well in peak hours. SPC remains concerned about the route south. Whilst this may be the case with an even flow of traffic there are pinch points where traffic becomes one way as a result of larger vehicles negotiating the corner and junction with Fleet Hill at The Tally Ho in Eversley and the narrow bridge into Hampshire. The frequent road works and temporary traffic lights along this route already demonstrate how vulnerable this stretch is with queues backing up in both directions causing severe delays. The issues

southbound on the A327 through Eversley, its junction with the Bramshill Road and the junction with the A30 need to be addressed in their totality.

SPC is not convinced about the effectiveness of measures to stop extra traffic created by the MFT and Crest Nicholson developments from taking a direct route through Swallowfield parish to travel to destinations such as Basingstoke and the south west and towards the Mere oak Park and Ride and M4 J11.

The MFT transport assessment quotes the B3030 as the most direct access to the M4. This route is very busy already and many drivers use the cut through from Mole Road to Mill Lane which frequently floods and is one-way in two places. We are concerned about the suitability of the B3030 route and how traffic might divert to find alternatives.

Whilst the Nine Mile Ride extension will provide good access to the new Secondary School from the east, the access route for pupils travelling from its catchment to the west including Swallowfield is not ideal and would exacerbate the problems through Farley Hill.

3. Environment

SPC welcomes the inclusion of more up to date reports and surveys. Once concluded, the biodiversity of the affected area would seem to have been well considered subject to the following omissions:

- a) There would appear to be an extended period of up to 10 years during which severe pressure will be placed upon the environment due to the construction period and before the proposed mitigation will be effective. SPC would ask that the project plan for construction be examined carefully to ensure that pressure on flora and fauna (especially BAP species) does not result in areas that become so impacted that recovery to the pre-construction levels of activity become impossible. This could include temporary nesting boxes, foraging sites, wildflower planting, etc. during the construction at sites most affected. These should be specific to the impact of construction and be in addition to those included within the SDL Environmental Statement.
- b) The SANG Management Plan references the need for ongoing and future management of certain areas such as car parking, maintenance of bird boxes, etc. SPC would ask that sufficient funds are committed to ensure satisfactory standards are maintained to ensure that section 5.3 on the Management Plan is fully achieved.
- c) SPC is concerned that the study areas do not extend to a sufficient extent beyond the actual SDL development site. We are particularly concerned about the "compounding effect" that the Arborfield SDL and the South of the M4 SDL will have on biodiversity and habitat in both Swallowfield Parish and, perhaps more importantly, The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). There would appear to be no determination of the effects of two sizeable SDLs being built in close proximity at the same time as well as the future effects of such a significant increase in development in two separate directions.
- d) SPC is concerned that the Highway and Transport environmental effects upon Swallowfield Parish have not been fully considered (please refer to Section 2 above) and that an understatement of traffic volumes with the associated environmental impacts has not been fully considered or mitigated.

4. Local Governance

The vision in the MFT proposal is to create a "garden village". However, the SDL needs to be treated as a single district and community which includes the larger Crest Nicholson development to the north. A settlement of 3,500 houses is larger than a typical "village" and so the use of this type of language in the MFT application is unhelpful and misleading. As a relatively large new community spanning more than one parish, it remains unclear as to how the local government and governance issues will be resolved to ensure coherence and cohesion.

In conclusion, the Parish Council recognises that development of the Arborfield SDL is part of WBC's established Core Strategy and has therefore directed its comments at ensuring the best possible outcome.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. E Halson
Clerk

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