

# Agenda Item 10.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
173726	12/07/2018	Swallowfield	Swallowfield

<b>Applicant</b>	Woodridge Developments
<b>Site Address</b>	Balcombe Nurseries, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield, RG7 1PY
<b>Proposal</b>	Full application for the proposed erection of 5no dwellings with detached garages; a balancing pond and an ecological enhancement area.
<b>Type</b>	Full
<b>PS Category</b>	6
<b>Officer</b>	Mark Croucher
<b>Reason for determination by committee</b>	Major application

<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 13 June 2018
<b>REPORT PREPARED BY</b>	Assistant Director – Place

## SUMMARY

The application proposes the erection of five dwellings on the site with associated landscaping and an ecological enhancement area. The houses will comprise of two pairs of semi-detached dwellings and a detached property. Whilst there are no buildings on the land, parts of the site are previously developed (brownfield) and were historically used as a garden centre.

This application follows an extant outline planning permission (ref: O/2014/1944) for the erection of three dwellings on the site. At the time the outline permission was approved, it was considered that the residential proposal would be a preferable development than the established garden centre use because it would be more sympathetic to the character and appearance of the area and would include an ecological enhancement area. The principle of residential development has therefore been established and the assessment falls upon what impact the additional two dwellings would have in relation to the extant outline planning permission.

As set out, the proposed development seeks to increase the number of dwellings from the approved outline planning permission from three to five. Whilst this represents a numerical uplift, the footprint of the proposed buildings is marginally smaller than the indicative layout submitted with the outline application. There will be large areas of landscaping and an ecological enhancement area on the site and this remains unchanged from the outline permission. The proposed dwellings would have ample indoor and outdoor space, providing a satisfactory living environment for the future occupiers. Local residents have expressed support for the application and the proposed development would have a satisfactory impact on the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers.

There are no objections to the proposal with regard to highway safety; parking; trees; drainage & flooding; ecology and archaeology. The development is considered acceptable in all other aspects subject to the recommended conditions and a legal agreement securing a commuted sum for affordable housing (£214,938.56); an index linked Strategic Access and Management Monitoring payment to offset the impact on the Thames Basins Heaths Special Protection Area (currently calculated at £4,429.10) and

an Ecological Enhancement Management Plan. The application is accordingly recommend for approval for the reasons set out in this report.

#### **PLANNING STATUS**

- Countryside
- Green Route Enhancement Area
- Burghfield Zone C (5 km)

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

APPROVAL, subject the applicant entering into a legal agreement securing a commuted sum of £214,938.56 in lieu of 2 affordable units; an index linked Strategic Access and Management Monitoring to offset the impact on the Thames Basins Heaths Special Protection Area (currently calculated as £4,429.10) and an Ecological Enhancement Management Plan. Also subject to the following recommended conditions:

##### Time limit

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In pursuance of s.91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

##### Approved plans

2. This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered ref: 2396-15; 2396-16; 2396-17; 2396-18; 2396-19; 2396-20; 2396-21 and 2396-22. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

##### Material samples/details

3. Before the development hereby permitted is commenced, samples and details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building/s shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the so-approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory.  
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.

##### Scheme for landscaping

4. Prior to the commencement of the development there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall specify species, planting sizes, boundary treatment, tree pits spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted, and any existing trees or shrubs to be retained. Details of boundary treatment and hard landscaping shall also be included. Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building(s).

Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting (or within a period of 5 years of the occupation of the buildings in the case of retained trees and shrubs) die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species or otherwise as approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure adequate planting in the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21 (and TB06 for garden development)

#### Tree protection details

5. a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until a scheme which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority (the Approved Scheme); the tree protection measures approved shall be implemented in complete accordance with the Approved Scheme for the duration of the development (including, unless otherwise provided by the Approved Scheme) demolition, all site preparation work, tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery.

b) No development (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) shall commence until the local planning authority has been provided (by way of a written notice) with a period of no less than 7 working days to inspect the implementation of the measures identified in the Approved Scheme on-site.

c) No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the Approved Scheme.

d) The fencing or other works which are part of the Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval of the local planning authority has first been sought and obtained.

Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of amenity value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21

#### Retention of existing trees

6. No trees, shrubs or hedges within the site which are shown as being retained on the approved plans shall be felled, uprooted wilfully damaged or destroyed, cut back in any way or removed without previous written consent of the local planning

authority; any trees, shrubs or hedges removed without consent or dying or being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within 5 years from the completion of the development hereby permitted shall be replaced with trees, shrubs or hedge plants of similar size and species unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure adequate planting in the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21 (and TB06 for garden development)

#### Visibility splays

7. Prior to the commencement of the development there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, details of the proposed vehicular access to include visibility splays. The access shall be formed as so-approved and the visibility splays shall be cleared of any obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height prior to the occupation of the development. The access shall be retained in accordance with the approved details and used for no other purpose and the land within the visibility splays shall be maintained clear of any visual obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

#### Swept path details

8. Prior to the commencement of the development there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, details of a swept path analysis demonstrating vehicles can manoeuvre safely on site and enter and leave the site in both directions. No building shall be occupied until the access roads have been constructed in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

#### Parking spaces

9. No part of any building(s) hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until vehicle parking and turning space has been provided in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The vehicle parking and turning space so-approved shall be retained in accordance with the approved details and the parking space remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times and the turning space shall not be used for any purpose other than vehicle turning.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

#### Cycle parking

10. No building shall be occupied until secure and covered parking for cycles has been provided in accordance with the approved drawing(s)/details. The cycle parking/storage shall be permanently so-retained for the parking of bicycles and used for no other purpose.

Reason: In order to ensure that secure weather-proof bicycle parking facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

#### Access surface

11. No building shall be occupied until the vehicular access has been surfaced with a permeable and bonded material across the entire width of the access for a distance of 10 metres measured from the carriageway edge.

Reason: To avoid spillage of loose material onto the highway, in the interests of road safety. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP6.

#### Dropped kerbs

12. Prior to the occupation of the dwellings hereby approved, details of dropped kerbs and tactile paving to the front of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details thereby agreed shall be fully implemented prior to the first occupation of the dwellings.

Reason: in the interest of pedestrian safety and to encourage walking and sustainable modes of transport.

13. No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide for:

- i) the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors,
- ii) loading and unloading of plant and materials,
- iii) storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development,
- iv) the erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate,
- v) wheel washing facilities,
- vi) measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction,
- vii) a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety & convenience and neighbour amenities. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

#### Drainage

14. No development shall take place until full details of the drainage system for the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The details shall include:

- Results of intrusive ground investigation demonstrating seasonal high groundwater levels for the site and infiltration rates in accordance with BRE365.
- Demonstration that the base of SuDS features are at least 1m above seasonal groundwater level.
- Full calculations demonstrating the performance of soakaways or capacity of attenuation features to cater for 1 in 100 year flood event with

a 40% allowance for climate change and runoff controlled at Greenfield rates, or better.

- Calculations demonstrating that there will be no flooding of pipes for events up to and including the 1 in 100 year flood event with a 40% allowance for climate change.
- A drainage strategy plan for the proposed development, including pipe details with invert levels.
- A maintenance management plan for the SuDS features throughout the lifetime of the development, as well as who will be responsible for the maintenance.

Reason: This is to prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 10 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.

#### Archaeology

15. No development shall take place within the application area until the applicant, their agents or successors in title have secured and implemented a programme of archaeological field evaluation in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The results of the evaluation will inform the preparation of a subsequent mitigation strategy which will be submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development. The mitigation strategy will provide for:

i) A programme of site investigation and recording, or alternative appropriate mitigation, within the area of archaeological interest. Development will not commence within the area of archaeological interest until the site investigation has been satisfactorily completed.

ii) A programme of post investigation assessment, analysis, publication, dissemination and archiving. This part of the condition shall not be discharged until these elements of the programme have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI or unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that any archaeological remains within the site are adequately investigated and recorded or preserved in situ in the interest of protecting the archaeological heritage of the borough.

#### Permitted development rights – windows

16. The first floor side windows in the development hereby permitted shall be fitted with obscured glass and shall be permanently so-retained. The window shall be non-opening unless the parts of the window which can be opened are more than 1.7 metres above the finished floor level of the room in which the window is installed and shall be permanently so-retained.

Reason: to avoid overlooking into neighbouring dwellings and a loss of privacy.

#### Permitted development rights - gates

17. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no gates or barriers shall be erected on the shared vehicular access / driveways hereby permitted unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To assist in the integration of the development into character and community of the area. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 & CP3, and Wokingham Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

### **Informatives**

1. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received. This planning application has been the subject of positive and proactive discussions with the applicant in terms of: addressing concerns relating to highway safety and residential amenities. The decision to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF is considered to be a positive outcome of these discussions.
2. The Head of Highways at the Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham [0118 9746000] should be contacted for the approval of the access construction details before any work is carried out within the highway (including verges and footways). This planning permission does NOT authorise the construction of such an access or works.
3. Adequate precautions shall be taken during the construction period to prevent the deposit of mud and similar debris on adjacent highways. For further information contact the Highway Authority on tel.: 0118 9746000.
4. Any works/ events carried out by or on behalf of the developer affecting either a public highway or a prospectively maintainable highway (as defined under s.87 New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA)), shall be co-ordinated and licensed as required under NRSWA and the Traffic Management Act 2004 in order to minimise disruption to both pedestrian and vehicular users of the highway. Any such works or events, and particularly those involving the connection of any utility to the site must be co-ordinated by the developer in liaison with the Borough's Street Works team (0118 974 6302). This must take place at least three months in advance of the intended works to ensure effective co-ordination with other works so as to minimise disruption.
5. The development hereby permitted is liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy. This is a matter for the developer. The Liability Notice issued by Wokingham Borough Council will state the current chargeable amount. Anyone can formally assume liability to pay, but if no one does so then liability will rest with the landowner. There are certain legal requirements that must be complied with. For instance whoever will pay the levy must submit an Assumption of Liability form and a Commencement Notice to Wokingham Borough Council prior to commencement of development. For more information see <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/developers/cil/cil-processes/>.

6. The applicant is advised to consider the rubbish and recycling information on the Council's website: <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/rubbish-andrecycling/collections/information-for-developers/>.
7. Should any bats or evidence of bats be found prior to or during the development, all works must stop immediately and an ecological consultant or the Council's ecologist contacted for further advice before works can proceed. All contractors working on site should be made aware of the advice and provided with the contact details of a relevant ecological consultant.
8. The approved development is subject to the applicant entering into a legal agreement securing a commuted sum of £214,938.56 in lieu of 2 affordable units; an index linked Strategic Access and Management Monitoring payment to offset the impact on the Thames Basins Heaths Special Protection Area (currently calculated as £4,429.10) and an Ecological Enhancement Management Plan.

<b>PLANNING HISTORY</b>		
<b>Application Number</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Decision</b>
O/2014/1944	Proposed erection of 3 dwellings with garages and a balancing pond (means of access to be considered)	Approved: 31.10.2016
F/2007/2197	Proposed change of use of land from Garden Centre to Builders Merchant with demolition of existing sales building and erection of new building for builders merchants	Refused: 17.10.2007 Appeal Dismissed 06.04.2009.
F/2005/6160	Change from garden centre to builders yard	Refused 02.06.2006
VAR/2004/1391	Proposed variation of conditions 12 & 16 of consent 40500 to allow a substitute of layout plan	Approved 22.04.2004
VAR/2003/9521	Proposed variation to condition 11 of consent 40500 to amend the schedule of goods sold and areas within the garden centre sales building to include the sale of conservatories & garden buildings	Approved: 12.08.2003
F/2003/9191	Proposed erection of replacement workshop and store building. Demolition of existing building	Withdrawn
F/2003/0044	Proposed erection of replacement workshop and store building plus demolition of existing building	Approved: 22.10.2003
CLE/2002/7744	Application for certificate of lawful existing use of land as garden centre	Approved: 12.02.2003
F/2002/6245	Proposed redevelopment of garden centre, reuse of buildings, access improvement, road, parking and landscaping	Refused: 12.06.2002

F/1999/69285	Proposed erection of 3 detached dwellings 2 garages and associated works	Refused: 04.05.1999 Appeal Dismissed: 29.09.1999.
F/1998/68734	Proposed erection of 6 detached dwellings and garages demolition of redundant building	Refused: 09.02.1999 Appeal Dismissed: 29.09.1999.
V/1997/66449	Proposed Relaxation Of Conditions 1 And 3 on Consent 40500 For Extension Of Time For Commencement Of development for further 5 years (condition 1) & removal of condition 3 relating to removal of building	Approved: 25.02.1998
F/1996/63285	Proposed Erection Of 25 Detached Dwellings	Refused: 11.04.1996 Appeal Dismissed 04.03.1997
40500	Redevelopment of garden centre including the construction of garden centre sales building	Approved
37103	Redevelopment of existing garden centre	Approved: 13.03.1991

#### SUMMARY INFORMATION

##### For Residential

Site Area	2.31 ha
Existing units	0 (3 approved under application ref: O/2014/1944)
Proposed units	5
Existing density – dwellings/hectare	0
Proposed density - dwellings/hectare	2 dwellings per hectare (dph)
Number of affordable units proposed	0 (commuted sum of £214,938.56 in lieu of 2 affordable units)
Previous land use	Garden centre (sui generis) / Nil use.
Proposed Public Open Space	N/A
Existing parking spaces	N/A
Proposed parking spaces	12

#### CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Landscape and Trees	No objection but amendments could be incorporated.
Highways	No objection subject to further information.
Environmental Health	No comment.
Ecologist	No objection.
Drainage and Flooding	No objection subject to condition.
Archaeology	No objection subject to condition.
Affordable Housing	No objection subjected to commuted sum secured by legal agreement.

<p><b>REPRESENTATIONS</b></p> <p><b>Town/Parish Council:</b> Support the application but no reasons given.</p> <p><b>Local Members:</b> Cllr Munro – There is a great deal of history to the site and it would be preferable for the application to be determined by the planning committee.</p> <p><b>Neighbours:</b> 6 letters received supporting the application (1 letter is from a director of the Applicant <i>Woodridge Developments</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site already has outline permission of the scale proposed.</li> <li>• Less harmful than the garden centre development.</li> <li>• The site is Brownfield.</li> <li>• The development is consistent with the Swallowfield Village Design Statement.</li> <li>• Water run-off from the site can be addressed.</li> <li>• The rear of the site should be protected for wildlife.</li> <li>• The site is becoming an eyesore.</li> <li>• The design adds to the neighbourhood.</li> <li>• The site has been used unlawfully in the past.</li> <li>• The proposed houses will be elegant.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>APPLICANTS POINTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposal will make affective use of a previously developed site.</li> <li>• The footprint of the buildings are smaller than the indicative plans for the previously approved outline application.</li> <li>• Local residents support the application.</li> <li>• The development will have the benefits of an ecological enhancement area and will be less intrusive than the extant permission for a garden centre.</li> <li>• The development will provide a contribution towards affordable housing.</li> <li>• The proposal for 5 units provides a scale of property more in keeping with the character and appearance of the area.</li> <li>• There will be landscape enhancements.</li> <li>• The development is in a sustainable location with bus routes, shops and schools nearby.</li> </ul>
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<b>PLANNING POLICY</b>		
National Policy	<b>NPPF</b>	National Planning Policy Framework
Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010	<b>CP1</b>	Sustainable Development
	<b>CP2</b>	Inclusive Communities
	<b>CP3</b>	General Principles for Development
	<b>CP5</b>	Housing mix, density and affordability
	<b>CP6</b>	Managing Travel Demand
	<b>CP7</b>	Biodiversity
	<b>CP8</b>	Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

	<b>CP9</b>	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
	<b>CP11</b>	Proposals outside development limits (including countryside)
Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	<b>CC01</b>	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	<b>CC02</b>	Development Limits
	<b>CC03</b>	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	<b>CC06</b>	Noise
	<b>CC07</b>	Parking
	<b>CC09</b>	Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)
	<b>CC10</b>	Sustainable Drainage
	<b>TB04</b>	Development in vicinity of AWE
	<b>TB05</b>	Housing Mix
	<b>TB06</b>	Development of private residential gardens
	<b>TB07</b>	Internal Space standards
	<b>TB21</b>	Landscape Character
	<b>TB23</b>	Biodiversity and Development
	<b>TB25</b>	Archaeology
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	<b>BDG</b>	Borough Design Guide – Section 4 & 8.
		Swallowfield Village Design Statement
		DCLG – National Internal Space Standards

## PLANNING ISSUES

### Description of Development:

1. Full application for the proposed erection of 5 no dwellings with detached garages; balancing pond; associated landscaping; access drive and an ecological enhancement area. The houses will comprise of two pairs of semi-detached dwellings and a detached property. Whilst the vehicle access to the site is in situ, it will be narrowed to a more appropriate scale for the residential development.

### Principle of Development:

2. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD) policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
3. Policy CC02 of the MDD Local Plan sets out the development limits for each settlement as defined on the policies map. Policy CP9 sets out that development

proposals located within development limits will be acceptable in principle, having regard to the service provisions associated with the major, modest and limited categories. The site is outside of any settlement limits and is within the countryside between Riseley and Swallowfield, which are both defined as limited development locations.

4. Whilst the site is within the countryside, there is an extant outline planning permission for the erection of 3 detached dwellings (ref: O/2014/194) on the land. At the time of this approval it was considered that the residential development would have a preferable impact than an established garden centre use of the site. Whilst the garden centre had ceased operation in the mid-1990s, there was extant planning permission (ref: 40500) for a new garden centre that could be implemented. It was considered at the time of the outline application that the residential scheme would have less impact on the character and appearance of the area due to an overall reduction in built form. Whilst there are no buildings on the site at the present time, in 2014 a sales building was on the land and hard surfacing had been laid over large areas. An ecological enhancement area was also proposed as part of the application and the residential use would result in a significant reduction in traffic movements. The residential proposal was also supported by local residents and the Parish Council.
5. The Local Planning Authority has a very low lapse rate for residential planning permissions (approximately 1%). It is therefore considered that there is a realistic prospect of the extant outline planning permission for the erection of three dwellings being implemented and this represents a credible fall-back position.
6. Whilst it was considered that the garden centre application represented a realistic fall-back position in 2014, there have been several changes in circumstances which indicate this proposal is unlikely to come forward. Since the 2014 application was considered, a garden centre sales building has been removed from the site and there are now no buildings on the land. Since the residential permission was approved, there has been no commercial interest or effort to progress the garden centre application. The site has not been used for any activity related to a garden centre since 1994 and the original 1991 permission is now over 25 years old. Whilst the garden centre application is still technically capable of being implemented, it is very unlikely that this would ever come forward due to the substantial amount of time since the original permission and the lack of any demonstrable commercial interest in the site. Furthermore, as the site now has permission for residential development it is very unlikely that it would now revert from the broad established market of housing construction to a niche market of garden centre development. The garden centre fall-back position is therefore given negligible weight.
7. The consideration of the application therefore mainly falls against the fall-back position of the extant outline planning permission for 3 dwellings on the site and the proposal before the committee has been considered in this context.

**Character and Appearance of the Area:**

8. The site is in Wokingham District Landscape Character Area I2 – ‘Risely Farmed Clay Lowland’. The Landscape Character Assessment sets out that the Landscape is of overall moderate quality and in moderate condition.

9. As set out above, the extant permission for 3 dwellings was on balance considered acceptable because it was deemed to have a preferable impact on the character and appearance of the area than the garden centre application. Whilst that permission was outline with the layout, appearance, scale and landscaping to be agreed at the reserved matters stage, indicative plans were submitted showing 3 very large dwellings and an access road. The proposed development for 5 dwellings depicts the buildings having a marginally similar footprint (810 sqm) to the indicative drawings submitted with the 2014 application (834 sqm). The proposal will represent an uplift in the quantum of development by 2 dwellings but these have been created within the footprint of the outline application indicative drawings and therefore the physical mass of the buildings and the areas of soft landscaping on the site would be comparable to the fall-back position.
10. The proposed dwellings are set back from Basingstoke Road and the semi-detached properties have been asymmetrically designed to appear as one large house. The increase of 2 units on the site would result in a greater density of development and an increase in domestic paraphernalia on the land. However, the impact of this on the overall landscape would be limited in comparison to the extant permission.
11. The proposed increase to 5 dwelling would result in a larger access road. The impact of the soft landscaping to the front of the site would however not be impacted. Basingstoke Road is a Green Route Enhancement Area and the landscaping to the front of the site would not be diminished as a result of the increase of dwellings.
12. The proposed houses would be set back from Basingstoke Road and do not strictly follow the linear development along the road frontage. However a neighbouring property called *Uplands* is set back from the road and the location of the proposed houses would not be dissimilar to this dwellings. Furthermore the location of the dwellings is similar to the indicative drawings submitted with the outline application.
13. The design of the properties incorporates traditional features such as pitch roof forms; solid arch detailing above windows; tile hanging; chimneys; timber detailing on the gables and casement windows. The form of the buildings would have a series of projecting and recessed features and this helps to break up the overall mass and scale of the properties. Overall it is considered that the design of the properties is acceptable for the context of the area.
14. Taking the above into consideration, it is not considered that the proposal will result in materially harmful impact over the extant outline permission for 3 dwellings on the site. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal will have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area and the countryside.

**Residential Amenities:**

15. The proposed buildings will be positioned between 6 – 10 metres from the boundaries of the existing properties and this far exceeds the minimum separation distances set out in the Borough Design Guide SPD of 2 metres. Furthermore, the boundaries are defined by trees and planting that will further screen the development from neighbouring houses.
16. The side elevations of plots 1 to 5 face neighbouring boundaries and condition 16 is recommended ensuring first floor side windows are obscurely glazed and top hung.

17. It is considered that the proposed development will have an acceptable impact on the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers with respect to overlooking, overshadowing and overbearing impact.

**Access and Movement:**

18. The proposed development is for the erection of five dwelling fronting onto a shared driveway/access road. The access to the site was built as part of the garden centre application which has never been implemented and therefore it was designed to accommodate a significantly greater amount of traffic than the proposed residential scheme. Whilst the proposal seeks to narrow the access to a more domestic scale, the location of the access in this location has been established. The increase in vehicle movements from 3 dwellings to 5 would not detrimentally impact highway safety. It is considered that there is satisfactory space for vehicles to manoeuvre on site and leave in a forward gear subject to condition 8.

19. Twelve formal car parking spaces are depicted on the submitted plans and opportunities for informal parking will also be available on the hard surfaced areas. The Highway Engineer has advised that the parking layout is acceptable and details regarding cycle storage are secured by condition 10.

20. With regard to the sustainability of the location, the site is approximately a 1.14km walk to the post office; public house and medical centre along The Street in Swallowfield. There is a primary school (Lambs Lane) approximately 2 km from the site and there is a footpath along Basingstoke Road that links the site to school. A community centre is also located on the opposite side of Swallowfield.

21. Riseley is located to the south of the site. The proposed houses will be approximately 1.18 km walk to the centre where a pub and Community Hall are located. A footpath along Basingstoke Road links the site to Riseley.

22. A bus stop is located along Basingstoke Road and is currently used by two services (no. 7 and 145). The 145 operates one service per week on a Tuesday. The number 7 runs an hourly services from approximately 7am – 7pm Monday – Saturday and 4 services on Sundays. This service runs between Fleet and Reading.

23. The uplift in accommodation on the site from 3 houses to 5 would result in a greater number of occupants. Whilst the site is not a highly sustainable location there are bus services and footpaths in the area which make the houses accessible to local services and facilities. On balance it is not considered that the limited sustainability of the location would warrant a refusal reason on this basis, particularly given that the outline application has been previously approved.

**Flooding and Drainage:**

24. The application site is in Flood Zone 1 where the risk of flooding from rivers is low and as such all forms of development, including 'more vulnerable' uses, are acceptable. A balancing pond and generous area of porous soft handspring have been designed into the scheme. The Council's Drainage Engineer has considered the application and raised no objection to the proposed development. The proposal

will have an acceptable impact with regard to drainage and flooding subject to the recommended condition 14.

### **Landscape and Trees:**

25. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that *'maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and flora including protected species'*. Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan states that development proposals should demonstrate how they have considered and achieve to *'protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features'*.
26. The trees close to the entrance are being retained and these contribute to the character of the area and the Green Route Enhancement Area. Some category U trees located further into the site are being removed but no objection is raised to this as they cannot realistically be retained as living specimens. Condition 4 is recommended to ensure a suitable landscaping scheme that includes replacement trees is incorporated on the site.
27. A garage block located to north of the site will be in the root protection area (RPA) of an Ash and Willow tree but the majority of the RPA to these trees will not be affected and the garage block has been shown to be a no dig construction. An historic building on the site was located in this position and was only removed recently, since the approval of the outline application. The Tree and Landscape Officer has advised that the location of the garage block seems unnecessarily close to the trees. A building has however been historically located in this position and it is not considered that the garage block will detrimentally impact the wellbeing of the trees. A garage block to the south will also be located close to mature trees but it would be outside of all RPAs.
28. The development will incorporate significant areas of soft landscaping and an ecological enhancement area to the west. Overall it is not considered that the uplift in development from the extant permission would diminish opportunities for soft landscaping or detrimentally impact the Green Route Enhancement Area along Basingstoke Road. The proposal will have a comparable impact to the extant outline permission with regard to landscape and trees.

### **Environmental Health:**

29. The Environmental Health Officer has advised that according to historical mapping there is no contamination on or near to the site. Therefore they have confirmed that they have no comment to make on this application. No objection is raised with regard to contamination.

### **Amenity Space for future occupiers:**

30. The semi-detached houses will have rear gardens at least 25 metres deep and the detached property will have a rear garden approximately 50 metres deep. This will comply with the minimum garden depth of 11 metres set out in the Borough Design Guide SPD. The proposed development will provide a suitable level of private amenity space.

### **Internal Space Standards:**

31. The proposed development comprises of 4 no 4 bedroom semi-detached properties and 1 no 6 bedroom detached dwelling. The Nationally Described Space Standard recommends a minimum floor area of 97 sqm for a 4 bedroom property and 123 sqm for a 6 bedroom house. The proposed dwellings will significantly exceed the national minimum requirements. The 4 bedroom houses will have a floor area of approximately 160 sqm and the 6 bedroom property 500 sqm. The proposed dwellings will therefore provide an acceptable standard of accommodation for the future occupiers.

**Ecology:**

32. Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy states that development proposals that may harm habitats or species of principle importance or features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna (including wildlife and river corridors), will only be permitted if it has been clearly demonstrated that the need for the proposal outweighs the need to safeguard the nature conservation importance; that no alternative sites that would result in less or no harm is available which will meet the need.

33. The application site comprises a grassland field and previously developed areas. Whilst overgrown, a large amount of scalping have been laid on the site which will be removed. The previously approved application (ref: O/2014/1944) for the election of 3 dwellings included the retention of open space to the west which would be managed for wildlife enhancements. The proposed scheme for 5 units also retains the area to the west as open space and the footprint of the buildings is no greater than previously approved development.

34. WBC's ecologist has advised the following:

*'Since the current proposed overall footprint of the dwellings does not significantly differ from that previously approved, there are no additional concerns regarding impact upon protected species. The ecological enhancements originally suggested should be incorporated into the development (to include native-species planting on the western field, bat roosting opportunities on and around the new buildings, refugia piles and bird boxes [see correspondence from Ecology Officer for 143156, dated 05 February 2015]). Currently, the landscaping scheme includes the note "Area of the site subject to ecological enhancements", indicating that the field to the west is to be retained as open space and enhanced to benefit wildlife.'*

*Further details of the area to be enhanced (including details of the planting mix and ongoing maintenance), as well as the locations of enhancements for birds, bats and reptiles and amphibians will need to be provided although this can be secured via a S106 or a planning obligation.'*

35. The proposed development will incorporate ecological enhancements in accordance with policy CP7 of the Core Strategy and TB23 of the MDD Local Plan. An ecological management plan will be secured by a section 106 agreement.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Special Protection Area (SPA) & Affordable Housing:**

36. As the proposal is for new residential floor space, it would be a CIL liable development. CIL is charged at a rate of £365 per square metre. If the development is approved, a CIL liability notice would be issued.
37. The site is within 5km of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Policy NRM6 of the South East plan requires that proposals mitigate their impact upon the TBHSPA. Avoidance payment towards SANG is classed as infrastructure and therefore is included within the CIL payment. SPA-wide Strategic Access and Management Monitoring (SAMM) is not considered to fall within the definition of infrastructure and therefore is continued to be secured through legal agreements. The application is recommended for approval subject to a legal agreement securing an index linked to the SAMM payment, which is currently calculated as £4,429.10.
38. The application site is over 0.16 ha in area and policy CP5 of the Core Strategy requires the proposal to contribute towards affordable housing. The site is outside of the development limits and therefore a minimum contribution of 40% is required, equating to 2 equivalent affordable units. The Affordable Housing Team has advised that an offsite commuted sum would be acceptable and this has been calculated as £214,938.56.
39. An Affordable Housing Financial Viability Analysis has been submitted with the application. This has been reviewed by an independent consultant. The contents of the viability analysis contains commercially sensitive information and is therefore confidential. Notwithstanding this, the independent consultants conclusions on the submitted information is that there is a sufficient profit margin and surplus to provide the full commuted sum requested.
40. The applicant has agreed to pay the full commuted sum and this approval is subject to the applicant entering into a legal agreement.

### **Archaeology:**

41. The site is within an area of archaeological potential. Berkshire Archaeology have advised the following:

*‘Numerous find spots ranging in date from the Bronze through to Post-Medieval are recorded on the Historic Environment Records within the area. Just over 500m to the west prehistoric worked flint, a Roman finds scatter and medieval pottery sherds have been found. Prehistoric worked flint and undated pottery sherds have been found 300m to the north of the site and there linear cropmarks located c600m to the south west of the site. To the east of the site finds dating to the Bronze Age through to the medieval period are recorded. In addition to this evidence there are two areas identified within the Wokingham Borough Council Plan as being Areas of High Archaeological Potential. One is 200m to the north and the other a little over 400m to the north east.’*

42. There is a potential that archaeological remains may survive within this site and an archaeological evaluation will be required to be carried out: condition 15 is therefore recommended.

**AWE:**

43. The site is within a 5km zone of the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) at Burghfield. Policy TB04 of the MDD Local Plan states that Development will only be permitted where the applicant demonstrates that the increase in the number of people living, working, shopping and/or visiting the proposal (including at different times of the day) can be safely accommodated having regard to the needs of “Blue light” services and the emergency off-site plan for the Atomic Weapons Establishment site at Burghfield. The proposal fall significantly below the level of 500 new residents set out in the policy that would require additional consultation and consideration.

**CONCLUSION**

The application follows an extant outline planning permission (ref: O/2014/1944) for the erection of three dwellings on the site. The principle of residential development has therefore been established and the assessment falls upon what impact the additional 2 units would have in relation to the extant outline planning permission.

The proposed development seeks to increase the number dwellings from the extant permission from three to five. Whilst this represents a numerical uplift, the footprint of the proposed buildings is marginally smaller than the indicative layout submitted with the outline application. There will be large areas of landscaping and an ecological enhancement area on the site and this remains unchanged from the outline permission. The proposed dwellings will have ample indoor and outdoor space and will provide a satisfactory living environment for the future occupiers. Local residents have expressed support for the application and the proposed development would have a satisfactory impact on the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers.

There are no objections to the proposal with regard to highway safety; sustainable location; parking; trees; drainage & flooding; ecology and archaeology. The development is acceptable in all other aspects subject to conditions and a legal agreement securing a commuted sum for affordable housing; a SAMM avoidance payment to offset the impact on the Thames Basins Heaths Special Protection Area and an Ecological Enhancement Management Plan. The application is accordingly recommend for approval.