

Agenda Item 74.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
192826	29 January 2020	Woodley	Bulmershe and Whitegates;

Applicant	L & C Investments Limited
Site Address	The Western Site, Headley Road East, Woodley, RG5 4SN
Proposal	Full application for the demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment of the site to form 5 industrial units for uses within Use Classes B1 (b and c), B2 and B8 with ancillary B1a; and erection of a building to be used as a builders' merchant (Sui Generis) for the display, sale, storage of building, timber and plumbing supplies, plant and tool hire including outside display and storage racks, with associated access, car parking and landscaping. (Part retrospective)
Type	Full
PS Category	3
Officer	Graham Vaughan
Reason for determination by committee	Major application

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 8 January 2020
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Place

SUMMARY
<p>The site is located in the major development location of Woodley and within an existing Core Employment Area. It is part of an existing industrial area with other commercial uses nearby well established. The site is accessed from Headley Road East and used to contain a number of buildings mostly in B uses but a D2 use was also present. The buildings on the site have been demolished prior to the submission of the application and therefore it is considered as part retrospective.</p> <p>The proposal is for the redevelopment of the site to provide a builder's merchant building with associated storage racks and parking as well as two buildings to provide mixed use B uses with associated parking. An area of landscaping with protected trees exists to the front of the site and this would be retained. The two areas of the site would be accessed separately from Headley Road East.</p> <p>Due to the location within a Core Employment Area, the proposal should comply with policy CP15 of the Core Strategy and policy TB11 of the MDD Local Plan. This aims to promote development for business, industry or warehousing and states that any changes of use from B1, B2 or B8 uses should not lead to a net loss of B use floor space across the Borough. Whilst there would be a loss of overall floor space the scheme would result in the occupation of buildings within B use and a use similar to B uses which would provide employment opportunities. As such, the creation of employment opportunities is given substantial weight to the extent it outweighs the minor harm caused as a result of the loss of B use floor space. In any case, at the last check, there was a surplus of B use floor space across the Borough.</p> <p>The design of the buildings and their overall size is considered commensurate with the surrounding area given the industrial and commercial appearance. Furthermore, the</p>

distance to residential properties would ensure no harmful impact would occur on residential amenity. With regard to highway impacts the access would be suitable for the volume of traffic expected to be generated and parking provision would be in accordance with parking standards. Subject to conditions, it is considered other aspects can be successfully controlled including ecological, tree and landscape, environmental health and sustainable design and construction impacts. Therefore, the proposal is considered to accord with local and national planning policy and is recommended for approval.

PLANNING STATUS

Overhead cables 15m buffer
Contaminated Land Consultation Zone
Local Authorities
Affordable Housing Thresholds
Borough Parishes
Core Employment Areas
Scale and Location of Development Proposals
Replacement Mineral Local Plan
Tree Preservation Orders
Borough Wards
Landscape Character Assessment Area
Local Plan Update Submitted Sites
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
Electricity Sub Station

RECOMMENDATION

That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following:

- A. Completion of a legal agreement to secure a contribution towards an employment skills plan;**
- B. Conditions and informatives:**

Conditions and Reasons

1. Approved details - This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered 'AC18021-CIV-0100 Rev P4', 'AC18021-CIV-0102 Rev P4', 'AC18021-CIV-0101 Rev P4', 'TP-PAL-E-45- 27-12 Rev A', 'TP-CAN-F3-50-43-12', 'TP-PAL-AB-45-27-12 Rev B', '3817/P003b', '3817/P001', '3817/P002', '3817/P300', '3817/P201', '3817/P102', '3817/P202', '3817/P200a', '3817/P100a' and '3817/P101a' received by the local planning authority on 30 October 2019. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with 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.

2. External materials - Before construction of 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.

3. Construction method statement - No construction 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.

4. Travel Plan - Prior to the construction of the development a Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The travel plan shall include a programme of implementation and proposals to promote alternative forms of transport to and from the site, other than by the private car and provide for periodic review. The travel plan shall be fully implemented, maintained and reviewed as so-approved.

Reason: To encourage the use of all travel modes. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 9 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policy CP6.

5. Drainage Details - Construction of the development hereby approved shall not commence until the full drainage strategy drawing of the scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drawing shall indicate the location of the attenuation tanks including cross sections, the connection to the existing sewer and invert levels. Development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the so-approved details.

Reason: To demonstrate that the proposed system works. 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.

6. Parking and turning space to be provided - No part of any building(s) hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until the vehicle parking and turning space has been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The vehicle parking and turning space shall be retained and maintained in accordance with the approved details and the parking space shall remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times and the turning space shall not be used for any other purpose other than vehicle turning.

Reason: To provide adequate off-street vehicle parking and turning space and to allow vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward gear in the interests of road safety and convenience and providing a functional, accessible and safe development and in the interests of amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

7. Access surfacing - 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 15 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.

8. Access to be provided - No building shall be occupied until the access has been constructed in accordance with the approved plans.

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

9. Cycle parking details required - Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted details of secure and covered bicycle storage/ parking facilities for the occupants of [and visitors to] the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The cycle storage/ parking shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved before occupation of the development hereby permitted, and shall be permanently retained in the approved form 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 9 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

10. Biodiversity Enhancement - Prior to the occupation of the development, details of biodiversity enhancements, to include bird and bat boxes, tiles or bricks on and around the new buildings and native and wildlife friendly landscaping, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the council. The biodiversity enhancements shall thereafter be installed as approved.

Reason: To incorporate biodiversity in and around developments in accordance with paragraph 175 of the NPPF.

11. Unforeseen Contamination - If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority) shall be carried out until a remediation strategy detailing how this contamination will be dealt with has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not contribute to, and is not put at unacceptable risk from or adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution from previously unidentified contamination sources at the development site. This is in line with paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

12. All trees, hedges and shrubs or similar vegetation where birds may nest which are to be removed as part of the development, are to be cleared outside the bird-nesting season (March - August inclusive) or if clearance during the bird-nesting season cannot reasonably be avoided, a suitably qualified ecologist will check the areas to be removed immediately prior to clearance and advise whether nesting birds are present. If active nests are recorded, no vegetation clearance or other works that may disturb active nests shall proceed until all young have fledged the nest.

Reason: To ensure that wildlife is not adversely affected by the proposed development in line with Policy CP7 of the core strategy and wildlife legislation.

13. Piling - If required, then no piling shall take place until a piling method statement (detailing the depth and type of piling to be undertaken and the methodology by which such piling will be carried out, including measures to prevent and minimise the potential for damage to subsurface water infrastructure, and the programme for the works) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority in consultation with Thames Water. Any piling must be undertaken in accordance with the terms of the approved piling method statement.

Reason: The proposed works will be in close proximity to underground water utility infrastructure. Piling has the potential to impact on local underground water utility infrastructure

14. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the details as agreed in 'Energy and Sustainability Statement, GDM, Revision N3, 30 September 2019' received by the Local Planning Authority on 30 October 2019 and shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved plan unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure developments contribute to sustainable development. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 10 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1, Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC05 & the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document.

15. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the details as agreed in 'Noise Assessment, Enzygo, CRM.1568.001.NO.R.004, October 2019' received by the Local Planning Authority on 30 October 2019 and shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved plan unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To safeguard residential amenities. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

16. The new buildings shall achieve BREEAM level 'Pass' in accordance with the requirements of BREEAM [or such national measure of sustainability for non-residential design that replaces that scheme].

Reason: To ensure developments contribute to sustainable development. 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 policy CC04

Informatives

1. The proposed development is located within 15m of Thames Waters underground assets, as such the development could cause the assets to fail if appropriate measures are not taken.

2. Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development.

3. 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.

4. The requisite Travel plan would need to comply with the latest national and local guidance:

1) NPPF Section 9 (Sustainable Transport)

2) The Essential Guide to Travel Planning (DfT, March 2008) 3) Delivering Travel Plans Through the Planning Process (DfT, April 2009)

4) A Guide on Travel Plans for Developers (DfT)

5) Making Residential Travel Plans Work (DfT, June 2007) All accessible at:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/travelplans/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/improving-local-transport>

Also:

WBC Transport Plan 3 and Active Travel Plan 2011 – 2026

WBC Workplace Travel Plan Guidance and Residential Travel Plan Guidance

Documents, covering workplace travel plans and residential travel plans provide local guidance and are available on the Borough's website.

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application Number	Proposal	Decision
183229	Full planning application for the redevelopment to form 5 industrial units for different uses classes with associated access, car parking, hardstanding and landscaping works.	Withdrawn on 16 April 2019
182473	Application for prior notification of proposed demolition of existing buildings on site.	Refused on 12 October 2018
182804	Full planning application for the change of Use from B8 (storage and distribution) to use of the premises as a builders merchant (Sui Generis) for the display, sale, storage of building, timber and plumbing supplies, plant and tool hire including outside display and storage.	Refused on 11 October 2018
O/2001/3322	Outline application for the proposed redevelopment of site to create 3600 square metres of B1(c) light industrial and 8700 square metres of B8 warehouse units.	Conditional approval 12 June 2002

SUMMARY INFORMATION	
Site Area	3.08 hectares
Previous land use(s) and floorspace(s)	Former NTS House – Mixed B use (2835m ²) Hawkhurst House – B1 use (1065m ²) Stadium Building – Mixed B use & D2 (3944m ²)
Proposed floorspace of each use	Mixed B use – 1959m ² Builder's merchant (sui generis) – 1439m ²
Change in floorspace (+/-)	-1206m ²
Proposed parking spaces	74

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Berkshire Archaeology	No objection
National Grid	No comments received
South East Water	No comments received
Southern Gas Networks	No objection
SSE Power Distribution	No objection
Thames Water Utilities Ltd	No objection subject to condition (13) and informative (1, 2)
The Environment Agency	No objection subject to condition (11)
Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue	No comments received
Crime Prevention Design Advisor	No comments received
WBC Environmental Health	No objection
WBC Drainage	No objection subject to condition (5)
WBC Highways	No objection subject to conditions (6 – 9)
WBC Growth & Delivery (Planning Policy)	No objection
WBC Economic Prosperity & Place (Community Infrastructure)	No objection subject to ESP contribution
WBC Ecology	No objection subject to condition (12)
WBC Landscape and Trees	Request further information
WBC Cleaner and Greener	No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS
Town/Parish Council: No objection
Local Members: No comments received
Neighbours: No comments received

APPLICANTS POINTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development provides employment opportunities within designated core employment area • Trees to the front of the site are retained and would be protected throughout construction • Buildings are of a similar design to surrounding uses and therefore compatible with the character of the area

PLANNING POLICY		
National Policy	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010	CP1	Sustainable Development
	CP3	General Principles for Development

	CP4	Infrastructure Requirements
	CP6	Managing Travel Demand
	CP7	Biodiversity
	CP9	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
	CP15	Employment Development
Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	CC01	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	CC02	Development Limits
	CC03	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	CC04	Sustainable Design and Construction
	CC05	Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks
	CC06	Noise
	CC07	Parking
	CC09	Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)
	CC10	Sustainable Drainage
	TB11	Core Employment Areas
	TB12	Employment Skills Plan
	TB20	Service Arrangements and Deliveries for Employment and Retail Use
	TB21	Landscape Character
	TB23	Biodiversity and Development
	TB25	Archaeology
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	BDG	Borough Design Guide – Section 4
	CIL	CIL Guidance + 123 List
	WDS	Woodley Design Statement

PLANNING ISSUES

Description of Development:

1. The application is for the re-development of a brownfield site located on Headley Road East in Woodley. It is part retrospective but this relates only to the demolition of the buildings on the site. As a result of this however, it is considered a time limited permission for implementation purposes is unnecessary. The proposal is for the erection of five units within two buildings for multiple B use classes uses and the erection of one building as a builder's merchant. The two elements of the proposal would have separate access from Headley Road East and separate parking areas. In relation to the builder's merchant building, an area for storage racks would be located centrally to the site. As there are trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order at the north end of the site, the existing landscaping would be retained.

2. The builder's merchant building would be 55 metres in length and 21 metres in width. It would have a dual pitched roof with an eaves height of 7.1 metres and a ridge height of 8.5 metres. The other units would be split into two buildings, with units 1, 2 and 3 in a rectangular building with a length of 51 metres and a width of 22 metres. It would have a flat roof with a height of 8.4 metres. Units 4 and 5 would be in a similar but smaller building with a length of 35 metres and a width of 19 metres. It would have a flat roof of 8.6 metres.

Principle of Development:

3. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local 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.
4. Policy CC02 of the MDD sets out the development limits for each settlement as defined on the policies map and therefore replaces the proposals map adopted through the Core Strategy, as per the requirement of policy CP9. 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. As the site is within a major development location, the proposal is acceptable in principle subject to the policies as set out in the Core Strategy. As the site is within a Core Employment Area, the proposal should accord with policy CP15.
5. Policy CP15 aims to promote development for business, industry or warehousing and states that any changes of use from B1, B2 or B8 uses should not lead to a net loss of B use floor space across the Borough. This is supported by policy TB11 of the MDD Local Plan. The existing site has a lawful use for multiple B use floor space and it is noted that the application seeks approval for new B use floor space and a builder's merchant, which is a sui generis use. Nonetheless, despite the refusal of planning application 182804 the provision of a builder's merchant on the site immediately adjacent to the application site was considered acceptable in policy terms and this is a material consideration. Additionally, paragraph 4.71 of the supporting text to policy CP15 states "*through the creation of additional floor space on existing and new sites, it will also be possible for the reuse of some existing employment sites for other uses, especially in those locations where there is a demand for other uses and/or a lack of demand for business uses without a net loss in employment floor space. Such areas could include Molly Millars Industrial Estate and land on the south side of Headley Road, Woodley*".
6. With regard to floor space, the application states that a total of 4604m² existed on the site. It is noted that much of this has been demolished but nonetheless this is the most appropriate assessment of floor space that can be made. The proposal would result in 1959m² of B use floor space being created. The builder's merchant would create an additional 1439m² of sui generis floor space. Nevertheless it is acknowledged that a builder's merchant is similar to a storage and distribution use and therefore could be considered as a suitable use for the site. This brings the total floor space created on site as 3398m² which is ultimately less than what previously existed. Notwithstanding this loss of 1206m², it should be considered what harm would arise. Firstly, the proposal would ensure an employment use exists on the site.

Secondly, it would ensure the site is put to use and does not remain vacant. Thirdly it should be noted that the previous buildings were constructed some time ago and required a substantial amount of work to improve them to modern standards. This had a negative impact on the sale of the site. Additionally, modern standards include technological improvements which are likely to result in less space being required for a typical B use than when the Core Strategy was originally written. Fourthly, the planning policy team have confirmed that, at the last check, there was a surplus of B use floor space across the Borough.

7. Based on the above, it is considered that as the proposal generates employment and brings a site back into use, the positive impacts of this outweigh the negative impact of losing some floor space. Therefore, whilst there is some conflict with policy CP15, it is not considered harmful to the extent a reason for refusal could be substantiated.

Character of the Area:

8. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy states that development proposals should maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment. Policy CP3 states development should be of *'an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life'*.
9. The site is part of the Headley Road industrial area and this is well established. Industrial and commercial style buildings are typical of the area and tend to have large footprints with low pitched or flat roofs. There are a mix of materials used however these tend to be industrial in their appearance. Also apparent in the immediate surroundings of the site are residential properties. Again this is a well-established relationship, particularly so in Woodley where large residential estates have existed near the Headley Road industrial area for some time.
10. The proposal includes two distinct sections, the larger builder's merchant building and the smaller B use buildings to the west. Associated areas for parking, deliveries and storage racks would be located between the buildings and centrally in the site. The existing area of landscaping to the north of the site and adjoining Headley Road East would be retained.
11. The builder's merchant building would be larger in footprint than the other two buildings but they would be comparable in terms of height. More importantly, they would be similar to the established character of the area in terms of a large footprint and low pitched or flat roofs. Similarly, the type of external materials to be used would be in keeping with the industrial appearance of surrounding buildings. As such, no objection is raised with regard to the size or appearance of the proposal.
12. The proposal includes an area of external racking which would provide storage for materials and it is noted that this would be visible from Headley Road East. However, consideration should be given to the fact that views from the road are of typical industrial buildings/materials including, for example, palisade fencing and large delivery door ways. As such, it is considered that an area of external racking would not detrimentally impact the character of the area.
13. The landscaping area to the front of the site is important to the street scene as there are a number of trees along Headley Road East. With regard to the trees to the front

these are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. The proposal retains these trees and increases the grassed area at the front. As such, whilst in acknowledgment that the immediate area is commercial in appearance, the retention and enhancement of the soft landscaping is a positive aspect of the scheme.

14. As a result of the demolition that has occurred, some recladding of existing units (outside of the red line but within the applicant's ownership) would occur. No objection is raised with regard to this. Overall therefore the scheme is considered appropriate to the character of the area and accords with policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy and CC03 of the MDD Local Plan.

Residential Amenities:

15. Due to the separation distance to the nearest neighbouring residential property, it is considered no harmful impact would occur with regard to overlooking, overbearing or a loss of light.
16. With regard for noise and disturbance, it is noted that the proposal is for a use that typically would create such an impact and therefore potentially harm residential amenity. A Noise Assessment has been submitted which considers that the ambient noise level of the area can be maintained through appropriate design. However, given that specific occupiers are not specified the assessment does not conclude further than this. Notwithstanding the assessment, the separation distance and the fact there are other commercial and industrial buildings between the site and residential properties is considered to mitigate any potential noise and disturbance impact. As such, the proposal accords with policy CP3 of the Core Strategy and CC06 of the MDD.

Access and Movement:

17. *Highway Safety:* The application proposes to utilise the existing accesses onto Headley Road East. This would complement the two separate sections of the site with each having a dedicated access. The Transport Statement indicates the number of trips expected for each of the proposed uses based on TRICS data. This states that the size of the accesses and the visibility splays for each would be sufficient. The Highways Officer has considered this and does not raise any objection.
18. *Traffic Impact:* Given the amount of trips generated as based on TRICS data, it is considered the proposal would not have a harmful impact in terms of traffic on the highway network. Additionally, the site was originally in use and this would have generated traffic. As such, the Highways Officer does not object to the proposal.
19. *Parking:* With regard to the builder's merchant building, 21 spaces would be provided. The parking standards do not specify anything for this type of use and, in light of this, the applicant has submitted TRICS parking data for other builder's merchants. Considering comparable amounts of floor space, there is a range of examples of parking provision albeit dependent on staff numbers. The Transport Statement sets out that, when taking a median of these figures, the provision of 21 spaces would be above the average requirement. Additionally, consideration is given to planning application 171772. This granted permission for a similar sized builder's merchant that provided 14 spaces. Taking all of this into account, the Highways Officer does not object to this aspect of the proposal.

20. The application is speculative in terms of the split of B use floor space across the additional buildings. In such situations, it is considered appropriate to calculate the range of parking according to the highest and lowest scenarios. In this respect, the proposal could potentially be used purely for B1 floor space or for B8 floor space. The parking standards would require 79 spaces for a B1 use given the proposed floor space and 19 for a B8 use. Taking the median value between these numbers at 49 it is considered a provision of spaces that slightly exceeds this may be acceptable. Following discussions, the parking provision has been amended to provide 53 spaces. The applicant also notes that the parking standards do not split provision between the different types of B1 use floor space i.e. B1 (a), B1 (b) or B1 (c). Taking employment densities into consideration, through the Homes and Communities Agency, it is acknowledged that B1 (b) and B1 (c) employ fewer people per square metre of floor space compared to B1 (a). As such, it is considered that the provision of 53 spaces, above the median split between the highest and lowest scenarios according to the Council parking standards, and the provision of B1 (b) and B1 (c) floor space would be acceptable in this instance.

21. *Sustainability:* The site is well served by local bus services and accessible on foot or bicycle. It is noted that Woodley is not served by a train station. A draft Travel Plan has been submitted which sets out ways to encourage the use of alternative modes of transport to the private car. The Highways Officer does not object to this subject to a condition (4).

Flooding and Drainage:

22. Although the site is within Flood Zone 1, as the site is over a hectare in size, a Flood Risk Assessment is required. This concludes that the risk from surface water flooding is low to moderate and the risk from flooding from other sources is negligible. Whilst the buildings are classified as less vulnerable, the FRA sets out that surface water flood risk can be mitigated by the adoption of a suitable drainage strategy.

23. The proposed drainage strategy is for discharge to an existing sewer, but at a reduced rate compared to the existing, and attenuation via below ground storage. The Drainage Officer has considered the strategy and does not object to the proposal subject to a condition (5) requiring full details to be agreed.

24. The Environment Agency has also been consulted and whilst concerns are not raised with regard to flooding, it is noted that former uses of the site could have resulted in in unforeseen contamination. As such, subject to a condition (11) requiring potential contamination to be investigated and remediated if found, the EA does not object to the application.

Landscape and Trees:

25. As noted above there are trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order to the front of the site. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement has been submitted which gives details on the protection of these trees as well as stating no changes to the access are required which would impact the trees. The retention of these trees is considered important to the character of the area as they contribute positively to the street scene.

26. The Tree and Landscape Officer does not object to the scheme itself but has raised some issues with some of the detail of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement. These issues are being resolved and confirmation of this will be

provided in the Member's update. Additionally, confirmation of any recommendation conditions will be provided.

Environmental Health:

27. It is acknowledged that due to former uses of the site and surrounding uses there is potential for contamination to be present on the site and this has been highlighted by the Environment Agency. A Geo-environmental report has been submitted which states that no significant issues have been found in terms of contamination and ground conditions however and the Environmental Health Officer has not raised any objection to this. As such, it is considered the Environment Agency's recommended condition (11) relating to unforeseen contamination is appropriate.

28. An Air Quality Assessment has been submitted and identifies that the risk to air quality is low given the surrounding uses and previous use of the site. As the Environmental Health Officer has not raised any objection to this, no harmful impact is considered to occur.

Ecology:

29. The site contained a number of buildings previously as well as a large area of hard standing and therefore the ecological value of the site was limited. Additionally, it is considered there is limited connectivity to other areas due to the urban nature of the surrounding area. It is noted that the trees to the front of the site represent potential ecological value through nesting birds.

30. An Ecological Report and Bat Survey has been completed which concludes that the ecological value of the site is limited however there are opportunities for nesting birds on the site. In terms of bats, whilst some were recorded foraging in trees near the site none were recorded roosting in the buildings. The Council's Ecologist has considered the report and does not object to the proposal subject to a condition (12) requiring any potential vegetation removal to be undertaken outside of bird nesting season.

31. In terms of biodiversity enhancement, as required by the NPPF, it is noted that the proposal could include bird or bat boxes as well as wildlife friendly landscaping. It is considered this can be controlled by condition (10).

Sustainable Design/Construction:

32. MDD policy CC05 requires that non-residential proposals of more than 1,000m² gross floor space should provide for a minimum 10% reduction in carbon emissions through on-site renewable energy or low carbon sources. An Energy and Sustainability Statement has been submitted which states this will be achieved through the use of solar panels given the sufficient level of roof area that faces south. As such, subject to a condition (14) requiring this to be carried out, no objection is raised.

33. In line with Policy CC04 of the MDD, proposals for non-residential development over 100 square metres should, as a minimum, achieve the mandatory BREEAM requirements but seek to achieve higher. It is considered a 'Pass' rating could be achieved and, as such, a condition (16) requiring this is proposed.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

34. *Community Infrastructure Levy:* The Council's CIL charging schedule applies to residential and retail uses. As the development would be for sui-generis and B uses, it is not considered that the development would be CIL liable.

Employment Skills:

35. MDD Local Plan policy TB12 requires the submission of an Employment Skills Plan to support all applications for major development to demonstrate how proposals will take opportunities to offer training and apprenticeships or other vocational initiatives to develop employment skill in local people. This would be secured by a legal agreement to be concluded following a resolution to grant permission by the Planning Committee. As such, subject to this agreement, the proposal would accord with this policy.

Archaeology:

36. An Archaeological report has been submitted which states that despite some potential for archaeological finds in the area, previous development of the site is likely to have resulted in much potential being removed. The Council's archaeologist has considered the report and agrees with the findings. As such, no objection is raised and the scheme is in accordance with policy TB25 of the MDD.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts upon protected groups as a result of the development.

CONCLUSION

The redevelopment of the site ensures employment opportunities and occupied buildings would exist within a designated Core Employment Area. The proposal has been designed to ensure it would integrate into the character of the area and would provide suitable landscaping treatments respecting existing protected trees. Furthermore, no harmful impacts would occur with regard to residential amenity and impacts regarding highways, ecology and sustainable construction can be controlled through the use of conditions. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with local and national planning policies and therefore is recommended for approval.