

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2020 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.55 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Simon Weeks (Chairman), Chris Bowring (Vice-Chairman), Stephen Conway, Gary Cowan, Carl Doran, Pauline Jorgensen, Abdul Loyes, Andrew Mickleburgh, Malcolm Richards and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Officers Present

Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager
Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor
Justin Turvey, Team Manager (Development & Regeneration)
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

Case Officers Present

Nick Chancellor
Jeanette Davey
Natalie Jarman
Sophie Morris
Baldeep Pulahi
Simon Taylor
Graham Vaughan

78. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Angus Ross.

79. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 January 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following minor amendment:

Item 77 - Application 192852 "Malcolm Richards queried whether the road was wide enough to allow for large vehicles such as refuse or emergency vehicles adequate space in order to enter and exit the development **in a forward direction.**"

80. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Carl Doran declared a personal interest in Agenda item 88, land at 78 Reading Road, on the grounds that part of the application site was owned by BT, his employer. BT were not the applicants and they had no issue with the application. Carl added that he would still take part in the debate and the decision.

Simon Weeks declared a personal interest in Agenda item 88, land at 78 Reading Road, on the grounds that he had listed this item. Simon added that he had listed this item because of the level of local interest it had generated, and added that he had not formed an opinion regarding this application. Simon stated that he would listen to the Officer presentation and all representations before forming an opinion.

81. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

No applications were recommended for deferral, or withdrawn.

82. APPLICATION NO.193206 - TOUTLEY DEPOT, OLD FOREST ROAD, WOKINGHAM

Proposal: Full planning application for the demolition of all existing structures at Toutley Depot to permit the phased construction of a replacement depot including works buildings, storage, a new office accommodation block, ancillary drainage, landscaping, security fencing, surface parking and associated works

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council (WBC)

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 15 to 48.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Amended drawing reference under Condition 2;
- Amended numbering of details under Condition 6;
- Clarification of the Ecological Assessment to confirm that there was no evidence of bat roosts on site, however some existing potential roost features were being retained;
- Response from Wokingham Town Council stating they raised no objection however they would like consideration to be given to neighbouring residential properties.

David Smith, on behalf of the applicant (WBC), spoke in support of the application. David stated that this was an important WBC application which included modern buildings and facilities for contractors to enable them to continue to carry out high quality services for the Borough's residents.

Simon Weeks commented that there had been no objections received with regards to this application, and added that the proposals would reduce the floor space taken up on site.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether the phased redevelopment would reduce any current car parking provision in the interim. Sophie Morris, Case Officer, stated that interim car parking provision would be required to be addressed via submission of a construction management plan. Sophie added that all construction and contractor vehicles would be required to be contained within the red line boundary during all phases of construction.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried how heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) would access the site, and how many additional trees would be planted on the site. Sophie Morris stated that HGV access would be addressed via the submission of a construction management plan. Sophie stated that tree replacement was conditioned to exceed the number of trees removed.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey proposed that an informative be added, requesting that a two to one ratio of trees planted compared to trees removed be applied to this site, in line with WBC's aspiration to plant additional trees in order to tackle the Climate Emergency. This proposal was moved, seconded by Stephen Conway and added to the list of Informatives.

Gary Cowan queried who was paying for the depot redevelopment. Following the meeting, the following answer was provided by an Officer: "This is a Council owned depot and therefore the Council are paying for the redevelopment to secure the ongoing use of the site into the future – which will be beyond the current contract periods of the existing operators."

Gary Cowan made a number of comments with regards to this application. Gary stated his concern with regards to Condition 10a, and felt that it was worrying that the Committee would come to a decision, and the details of that decision could then be changed afterwards. Gary added that it would have been good to have clarity on the exact number of trees proposed to be felled. Gary was of the opinion that the Ecological Assessment and Bat Survey should have been submitted with this application, which would be expected should this have been a private developer application. Gary commented that tree replacement needed to be focussed on total foliage, as replacing a five metre tree with a one metre tree was not a proportional replacement.

RESOLVED That application number 193206 be approved, subject to Conditions and Informatives as set out in agenda pages 16 to 25, various amendments and clarifications as set out in the Members' Update and additional Informative as resolved by the Committee.

83. APPLICATION NO.192997 - LAND AT HOGWOOD FARM, SOUTH OF NINE MILE RIDE EXTENSION/BARKHAM BYWAY 18 AND WEST OF NINE MILE RIDE, RG40 4QY

Proposal: Reserved Matters application pursuant to Outline Planning Consent O/2014/2179, as varied by application 181194. The Reserved Matters comprise details of the Nine Mile Ride Extension (southern section) and Hogwood Spur roads, together with associated landscaping, footpaths, cycleways and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. Details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale to be considered

Applicant: L&G Homes

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 49 to 84.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Amendment to Condition 6;
- Correction to paragraph 11;
- Correction to paragraph 29;
- Correction to paragraph 36.

Steve Sugihara, resident, spoke in objection to the application. Steve stated that he had made several comments with regards to this application and felt that these had not been adequately addressed within the report. Steve was of the opinion that 30Mph was a high speed on the south side of Park Lane, and it could be very difficult for pedestrians to see oncoming traffic. Steve added that there was no U-turn facility on this proposed road extension. Steve queried why a four-way junction was being proposed and felt that this would be difficult to use. Steve was of the opinion that no assessment had been carried out with regards to the proposed four-way junction.

Simon Weeks commented that a turning head would be available at the Robinson Crusoe Park, where a barrier was present.

Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that the four-way junction was considered via a safety audit, and following the audit all safety issues raised had been addressed within the proposed plans.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried how many trees would be felled as part of these proposals. Nick Chancellor, Case Officer, stated that the exact amount of trees proposed to be felled was not currently known, however a tree boulevard would be created as part of this application. In addition, a landscape scheme was condition to be submitted.

Simon Weeks commented that a considerable amount of Officer time had been used in order to place Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on all high profile trees across the SDL.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried how many trees were proposed to be removed, and how many trees were proposed to be planted as part of this application. Simon Weeks commented that the details of this would form part of the conditioned landscape plan.

Gary Cowan and Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey requested that a copy of the landscape and archaeology plans be shared with them, when completed. Nick Chancellor confirmed to action this.

Stephen Conway proposed an additional Informative stating that it was an aspiration of Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) to plant significantly more trees within the Borough as part of the response to the declared climate emergency, and therefore requested that the applicant consider to accommodate a significant increase in trees planted compared to trees felled within the site. This proposal was moved and seconded by Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey and added to the list of Informatives.

Abdul Loyes queried whether the parking restrictions outside the school would be permanent or temporary. Judy Kelly stated that plans for parking restrictions were already being worked on in the form of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). Judy added that placement of double yellow lines were to be expected within the detailed designs.

Simon Weeks commented that the proposals would move traffic away from problematic highways areas, and objections had broadly been addressed. Simon queried when the proposed road was estimated to open. Judy Kelly stated that officers were ready to move into the detailed design stage, and the proposed road could be expected to open within the next few years. Judy stated that the trigger point for this development had been met, and the western section of the road was likely to be constructed first.

RESOLVED That application number 192997 be approved, subject to Conditions and Informatives as set out in agenda pages 50 to 55, amendment to Condition 6 as set out in the Members' Update, and additional Informative as resolved by the Committee.

84. APPLICATION NO.191655 - CROSFIELDS SCHOOL, SHINFIELD, RG2 9BL

Proposal: Full planning application for the proposed erection of a new senior school building, re-configuring of two entrances and demolition of existing White Building

Applicant: Crosfields School

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 85 to 134.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- A response from Reading Buses, withdrawing their objection;
- A further response from Reading Borough Council, objecting to the proposal;

- Correction to paragraph 27 to state a 1.1 percent increase;
- Correction to paragraph 37 bullet point 3 to refer to Condition 15;
- Correction to paragraph 42, deletion of the final sentence.

Craig Watson, applicant, spoke in support of the application. Craig stated that when he had joined Crosfields five years prior there was no anticipation of removal of the White Building nor expansion to accommodate GCSE students. The school had changed to a co-educational school and there was a desire from parents to keep families together throughout their secondary education. The proposals would allow for a year group of sixty pupils, with a maximum of eighty pupils per year group. Craig stated that there were no plans for inclusion of a 6th form on-site. A bus route had been introduced to the school and the school was willing to expand the route and there was a genuine desire to work with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) with regards to this. Approximately one quarter of pupils' on-roll were siblings, which would reduce journey trips to the school. Craig stated that the proposed removal of the White Building was regrettable, however it was inevitable. No children were taught in the White Building, and the building was unsuitable for teaching purposes. All trees proposed to be removed would be replaced, and the school wanted to allow families to be kept together.

Stephen Conway stated that there was a split in expert opinion regarding highways issues, with WBC's Highways team suggesting highways issues could be minimised whilst Reading Borough Council's (RBC's) Highways team still had objections on highways matters. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that RBC wanted two junctions to be assessed and did not state that there were serious or fundamental concerns. Judy added that an initial travel plan had been submitted by the applicant, however Officers had asked for more work to be conducted on the travel plan alongside them as per the condition. Judy stated that the proposals would lead to a less than one percent increase on existing traffic levels on the affected highways.

Simon Weeks commented that there had been speculation that some of the highways issues in this area had been caused by changes made by RBC at a local junction. Judy Kelly stated that an approach lane had been removed at the junction several years prior.

Jeanette Davey, Case Officer, stated that Shinfield Parish Council had not referred to the White Building in their comments, with their focus being on highways issues. Jeanette stated that there had been significant modifications to the White Building, with many being quite unsympathetic to the original design and outlook of the building. A substantial investment would need to be made by the applicant in order to restore the current building and make it fit for purpose.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey stated that previous motions had been passed by Council requiring all Borough schools to be fitted with sprinklers when built, adding that the Fire Chiefs across the country supported sprinklers within schools. Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor, stated that sprinklers were covered by separate regulations than that of planning regulations, and the Committee were required to make a decision based on material considerations. Mary added that a motion could not override the statutory obligations of the Committee to take account of material considerations. Rachelle proposed that an informative be added, encouraging the installation of sprinklers at the proposed development. This was seconded by Stephen Conway and added as an additional Informative.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether there were any measures, other than the travel plan, that WBC or RBC could enact to alleviate potential highways issues. Judy Kelly stated that Reading Buses comments and suggestions had been passed on to the transport teams, and WBC would work with RBC regarding traffic issues.

Pauline Jorgensen stated that she was in support of WBC working alongside RBC to find a solution to congestion issues in this area. Pauline queried whether there would be any improvements to crossing facilities for school children. Judy Kelly stated that the travel plan would look at all journeys to and from school and identify potential improvements.

Carl Doran queried whether this application could be deferred until the travel plan had been submitted. Judy Kelly stated that the applicant had committed, and was conditioned, to work with WBC and submit a suitable travel plan in due course. Simon Weeks proposed that should the Committee be minded to approve this application, the final submitted travel plan could be signed off by the Chairman of the Planning Committee and a Shinfield North Ward Member. The Committee agreed to this in principal, and this was added as an additional Informative.

A number of Members voiced their opinion that it was a shame that the White Building could not be retained as part of this application. Jeanette Davey reiterated that many unsympathetic modifications had been made to the building over the years, and it would take a substantial investment to make the building fit for purpose.

Gary Cowan queried why the air quality assessment was to be carried out prior to occupation of the new school buildings. Jeanette Davey stated that environmental health had proposed that the assessment be carried out prior to occupation, however Officers could ask environmental health whether the proposal could be reworded. Gary Cowan queried whether ongoing monitoring of air quality could be included within the proposals. Jeanette Davey stated that she would liaise with environmental health regarding air quality monitoring.

RESOLVED That application number 191655 be approved, subject to Conditions and Informatives as set out in agenda pages 86 to 99, and the two additional Informatives as resolved by the Committee.

85. APPLICATION NO.192756 - 1 THE HOLLIES, OLD WOKINGHAM ROAD, WOKINGHAM

Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of a two storey side extension

Applicant: Mr Andy Jordan

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 135 to 160.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Updated description of development;
- Updated Informative 1;
- Additional table added at the end of paragraph 11.

Simon Weeks stated that this item had been listed by a Member, however the second and third reasons for listing were not planning considerations.

Chris Bowring stated that the applicant was trying to overcome the previous reasons for refusal, primarily that the previous proposals had the appearance of a separate dwelling. Chris added that the new proposals had addressed this issue, and the neighbour comments did not relate to the previous reasons for refusal.

Carl Doran queried why the large increase to the existing property was considered acceptable. Natalie Jarman, Case Officer, stated that the proposals were set back within the property boundary and there was no longer a barn element to the application. Natalie added that the proposals were not considered to be an inappropriate increase in footprint of the original dwelling.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether a SAMM payment was required for this application. Natalie Jarman stated that it was conditioned that the proposals were not to be used as a separate unit, however the proposals were still CIL liable.

Gary Cowan queried whether the issue of the unit not being let or sub-let could be made subject to legal agreement. Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor, stated that a legal agreement would be unreasonable and would not help matters as there would still be no enforcement after four years.

RESOLVED That application number 192756 be approved, subject to Conditions and Informatives as set out in agenda pages 136 to 139, and updated Informative 1 as set out in the Members' Update.

86. APPLICATION NO.192906 - FORMER LEA FARM GRAVEL PIT, LODGE ROAD, HURST

Proposal: Full application for the proposed extension of existing reedbeds and creation of marshland to form a high value wetland habitat

Applicant: Lavell's Wetland Trust

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 161 to 178.

The Committee were advised that there were no Members' Updates.

RESOLVED That application number 192906 be approved subject to Conditions as set out on agenda page 162.

87. APPLICATION NO.193230 - WOKINGHAM COMMUNITY HOSPITAL, BARKHAM ROAD, RG41 2RE

Proposal: The removal of the existing medical gas (oxygen) bottle storage cage and the proposed installation of a modular pre built medical gas (oxygen) bottle storage unit

Applicant: Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 179 to 190.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included addition to paragraph 3, to add that the existing medical unit behind the existing bottle storage cage would be retained alongside the proposed new unit.

Simon Weeks stated that the proposals would provide better safety on site.

RESOLVED That application number 193230 be approved, subject to Conditions and Informatives as set out on agenda page 180.

88. APPLICATION NO.193059 - LAND TO THE REAR OF 78 READING ROAD, EVERSLEY

Proposal: Full application for proposed change of use to provide light industrial (Use Class B1) and internal and external storage and distribution (Use Class B8) on the site with associated parking

Applicant: Palmarium Properties Limited

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 191 to 230.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Clarification that although the Council's planning enforcement team are not pursuing further compliance with the two existing enforcement notices, they remain on the land and could still be enforced should it be considered expedient to do so;
- Clarification that skip operation could only take place on site should it not include transfer of waste or an office open to the public;
- Summary of additional comments received, and Officer responses.

Gareth Rees, resident, spoke in objection to the application. Gareth stated that the applicant had originally applied to seek permission for expansion over a larger area of the site, however they were advised to remain within the red line area at the pre-application advice phase. Gareth added that there had been many enforcement issues on the site over the years, and areas of the site had not been regenerated. Gareth stated that there had been a number of errors and omissions within the report, including no information regarding turning space for large vehicles which would have to reverse onto the main road. Gareth was of the opinion that the parking area should be a material consideration. Gareth stated that the transport statement had not raised the issue that 0.6 miles down the road heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) could not pass round the corner properly. Gareth asked that a full transport assessment be carried out with regards to this application.

Robin Henderson, agent, spoke in support of the application. Robin recognised the unfortunate planning history with regards to this site, and stated that the applicant wanted to derive beneficial usage from the site. Robin stated that the applicant had engaged with Officers and residents in the pre-application phase, and the proposals were a low key form of development which was not in excess of previous grants regarding noise and travel considerations. Robin added that the proposals were proportional and reasonable in planning terms.

Carl Doran queried what percentage area increase of development the proposals would cause. Simon Taylor, Case Officer, stated that the proposals would cause an approximate thirty percent increase of development on-site.

Carl Doran queried how many vehicle movements would be made to and from the site each day. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that historically the site incurred 26 vehicle movements per day, whereas the proposed application would incur 19 vehicle movements per day to the site.

A number of Members commented that that the application site was complex, and would be easier to interpret and understand after a site visit. Stephen Conway proposed that the item be deferred, and a site visit be undertaken. This was seconded by Carl Doran and subsequently carried. Simon Weeks asked that the site be marked out for the site visit to make it easier for Members to visualise the different site and highway areas.

RESOLVED That application number 193059 be deferred to allow a site visit to be undertaken.

89. APPLICATION NO.193285 - UNITS C5-C8, 800 SERIES BUILDING, ESKDALE ROAD, WINNERSH TRIANGLE

Proposal: Full application for the proposed change of use from warehouse (Use Class B8) to mixed Use Class B1 and B8 following part demolition of existing building (part of units C5-C8), including erection of a rooftop extension to create internal plant rooms, external alterations including new cladding and external plant areas, changes to fenestration, modification of existing landscaping and parking layout and creation of new parking

Applicant: Winnersh Midco SARL

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 231 to 274.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Deletion of Informative 3;
- Clarification that the information in Condition 6 was not required prior to commencement.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey commented that it was good to see a designated business area being maintained for business premises.

A number of Members raised their concern with regards to the felling of trees on the application site, particularly as 53 trees were planned to be felled with 25 replacement trees to be planted. Simon Taylor, Case Officer, stated that a wider landscaping plan was in place across the whole site which was wholly owned by the applicant. The landscaping plan would see a net increase of trees across the wider site. Simon added that the Council's tree Officer had accepted the proposals. Justin Turvey, Team Manager (Development & Regeneration), stated that the trees were not protected on-site and could be felled without planning permission.

Simon Taylor stated that the tree Officer had negotiated eight additional trees to be retained on the application site, and additional retained trees could inhibit growth of other trees, including newly planted trees. Simon reaffirmed that there was a commitment for a net increase of trees and landscaping across the wider site.

Stephen Conway proposed an additional Informative stating that it was an aspiration of Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) to plant significantly more trees within the Borough as part of the response to the declared climate emergency, and therefore requested that the applicant consider to accommodate a significant increase in trees planted compared to trees felled within the site and the wider business park site. This proposal was seconded, carried, and added to the list of Informatives.

RESOLVED That application number 193285 be approved, subject to Conditions and Informatives as set out in agenda pages 232 to 241, deletion of Informative 3 and correction to Condition 6 as set out in the Members' Update, and additional Informative as resolved by the Committee.

90. APPLICATION NO.193255 - TARGETTS FARM, MAIDENHEAD ROAD, WOKINGHAM

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a four bay steel framed agricultural barn with lean-to

Applicant: Burrows

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 275 to 292.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included correction to the fourth line of Condition 5 to read 'whichever is later'.

Simon Weeks queried why permitted development rights for the erection of a barn were not applied in this case. Simon Taylor, Case Officer, stated that permitted development rights were only relevant if the site was over 5 hectares in area, and the application site was 3.8 hectares.

RESOLVED That application number 193255 be approved, subject to Conditions and Informatives as set out in agenda pages 276 to 277, and correction to Condition 5 as set out in the Members' Update.