

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 8 JULY 2020 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.20 PM**

Committee Members Present

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

Officers Present

Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations, Planning Delivery
Marcia Head, Development Management Team Leader
Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager
Rachel Lucas, Legal Adviser to the Committee
Suzi Coyne, WBC Minerals and Waste Consultant

Case Officers Present

Stefan Fludger
Natalie Jarman
Sophie Morris
Graham Vaughan

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Gary Cowan and Angus Ross.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 May 2020, and the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Committee held on 21 May 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Andrew Mickleburgh declared a personal interest regarding agenda item 5 (application number 200893), on the grounds that he was a Member of the Earley Town Council Planning Committee who had made a recommendation regarding this application. Andrew added that he had an open mind regarding this application, and would consider all representations prior to making a judgement.

Carl Doran declared a prejudicial interest regarding agenda item 5 (application number 200893), on the grounds that they may have been a perception of predetermination due to comments previously made. Carl added that he would take no part in the discussion or vote related to this item.

Chris Bowring declared a personal interest regarding agenda item 9 (application number 200985), on the grounds that he was a member of the Wokingham Theatre who may benefit from an overall increase in parking in the area should the application be approved. Chris added he had an open mind regarding this application, and would consider all representations prior to making a judgement.

4. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

No applications were recommended for deferral, or withdrawn.

5. APPLICATION NO.200893 - 15 THE DRIVE, EARLEY, RG6 1EG

Carl Doran declared a prejudicial interest in this item and therefore took no part in the discussion or voting

Proposal: Householder application for the proposed first floor side and rear extension to existing dwelling and single storey rear extension (part-retrospective)

Applicant: Mrs Noor Khan

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 31 to 54.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included a correction to page 31 of the officer report to state that the site was within the Bulmershe and Whitegates Ward.

In line with the given deadlines, two public written submissions were received for this item. These submissions were circulated to Members in advance, and noted on the evening. The submissions as provided can be found below.

ACER Residents' Association provided the following statement in objection to the application:

1. "– ACER's is concerned to maintain the character of Whitegates which is predominantly separated semi-detached houses with sloping hip-end roofs.
2. To build houses too close to each other and omit the sloping roofs causes a terracing effect
3. Whitegates streets are characterised by green frontages. Removal of all greenery in front gardens changes the character of a street
4. To build the side extension **less** than the *minimum* distance to the boundary is unacceptable as it contributes to a terracing effect.
5. The side extension adjacent to the house shows a vertical gable end construction. This vertical end would give rise to a terracing effect which is unacceptable.
6. It should be noted that if the pitched roof of the main extension was continued all the way along its length, then the main house would end up with a hip end roof, which would be in keeping with the character of the area. Please see marked up drawing TDE:007.
7. The Borough Design Guide states that the rhythm of buildings and the gaps between them are important to the character of the area, which is valued by the residents.
8. Similar roof conversions have been rejected when applied for under local Planning procedures as they were *not* in character, including 192998 at 5 Byron Road
9. Should the Committee be inclined to Approve, the following conditions are requested:

- i) The **gap to the boundary should be a *minimum* of 1 metre**. There is no reason given as to why it should be less.
- ii) **The pitched roof profile of the extension should extend along the full length of the property**. This has no effect on the internal accommodation but has the benefit of returning the main property to a hip end.
- iii) **Reinstate soft landscaping in the front garden** which is tall enough to be seen when travelling down The Drive. This would maintain the character of the area in line with CP3 and assist with the green environmental emergency measures declared by WBC.”

Shirley Boyt, Ward Member, provided the following statement in objection to the application:

“There are 58 dwellings in The Drive.

All are 1930s semi-detached except for three newly built detached and one pair of semis which has a new dwelling attached making a terrace of three.

The convention in this road is for hipped roof joints not gable ends.

The houses stand on generous plots with ample room for side and rear extensions and the majority of houses have taken advantage of this. However, with the exception of only 3 dwellings (13, 15 and 27), all have maintained the hipped roof joint. Even the newly built properties have kept to this convention. Numbers 13 and 27 have no side extensions but have gable ends to the original house; in the case of no. 27, this is barely visible due to mature trees and shrubs in the front garden.

On the current application I have three points to make:

- a) What the Officer’s report does not make clear is that no. 15 and its neighbour, no. 13 are already at odds with the rest of the street scene as both have gable ends to the main house roof. Adding a side extension with another gable end will only exacerbate the problem whereas an extension with a hipped joint would go some way towards correcting this anomaly.
- b) The distance from the boundary should be 1 metre not 90cm. This might be seen as nit-picking and indeed the Officer’s report treats this as being inconsequential, so I would ask the Committee to consider this – do we now have a 10% tolerance in this regard? Is 90cm the new normal?
- c) WBC has declared a climate emergency. The planning process should be encouraging the retention or re-instatement of trees and shrubs at every opportunity to balance the needs of the motor car with the needs of the planet.

I note also that number 13 has just been sold and it is extremely likely that the new owners will at some point wish to extend. If you allow a gable on this extension, you will have set a precedent for number 13 to follow suit.

I therefore request that if the Committee is mindful to approve this application, please make such approval conditional on items a, b and c above.”

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Simon Weeks sought clarification that the dormer on the second floor rear roof had been completed under permitted development rights. Stefan Fludger, case officer, confirmed this to be correct. Simon noted that house number 17 (an immediate neighbour, had written in support of this application, whilst house number 13 (the other immediate neighbour) had written in to state that they had no objections to this application. Simon added that the nearest objection had come from the occupants of 6 Chiltern Crescent, who had the view of the rear extension.

Stephen Conway commented that in his view, the proposals were perilously close to overdevelopment.

Simon Weeks asked for confirmation that the front extension was seen as subservient to the host dwelling. Stephan Fludger confirmed this to be correct.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried how previous extensions were taken into consideration when assessing whether an extension was subservient, whether a hipped roof could lessen any potential terracing effect, why it was deemed acceptable to allow a 900mm separation distance, and why the potential loss of light in a neighbouring garden was deemed minimal. Stefan Fludger stated that officers did look at extensions as a whole when assessing whether a further extension would be subservient to the host dwelling, which was deemed to be the case for this application. Stefan added that the existing dwelling had a gabled roof, built under permitted development rights. The gabled roof was a common feature within the street scene, and it was the officer's view that forcing a hipped roof on the side extension would be discordant with the existing permitted development roof. In relation to separation distance, Stefan stated that officers looked for ways to ensure that there was a sufficient mitigation of any potential terracing effect, and in this instance 900mm was deemed sufficient. Stefan added that the 1000mm separation distance was a guideline rather than a strict policy. Stefan stated that there was to be a marginal loss of light in the 45 degree line towards the neighbouring conservatory. However, the reality of the infringement was deemed minimal as the light was available to the conservatory from all sides including the roof, and the conservatory was deemed as a lesser quality habitable space compared to a room such as a lounge as it was not typically used year round.

Simon Weeks commented that there had been no objections received from the owner of the conservatory, and there was currently a driveway between the neighbouring property whereby the 900mm separation gap to the boundary was proposed.

RESOLVED That application number 200893 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 31 to 32.

6. APPLICATION NO.200888 - LAMBS FARM BUSINESS PARK, BASINGSTOKE ROAD, SWALLOWFIELD

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 3 no. buildings (units R1, R2 and R3) for business use (Use Classes B1(a), (b), (c) and B8) with ancillary office space, parking and associated works

Applicant: J P Winkworth Limited

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 55 to 86.

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

In line with the given deadlines, two public written submissions were received for this item. These submissions were circulated to Members in advance, and noted on the evening. The submissions as provided can be found below.

Roderic Vaughan, resident, provided the following submission in objection to the application.

"Lambs Farm Business Park LFBP is not in Spencers Wood (paragraph 12 of report); is in rural parish of Swallowfield in open countryside, where a presumption against new development applies, in principle, based on current Development Plans.

Expansion of rural business parks like LFBP are considered strategically, through the Local Plan. This was done, but without success. Around 2010 it was noted the site 'could be recognised as having scope for consolidation or limited additional development'. LFBP was considered as a potential employment allocation through the MDDP when the Examiner noted 'evidence to support the site's inclusion on the basis of additional land is required, or that they are preferable in location, sustainability or deliverability, is not convincing'. There has been major expansion at LFBP since 2012. Sound planning principles have been ignored; potential further development at LFBP was found to be unsustainable at public examinations.

Policy CP 11 is relevant; restricts development outside development limits. Rural enterprise is referred to in the report in paragraph 7. Key consideration is whether the proposal contributes to a 'sustainable rural enterprise', which is not the case as stated previously and therefore conflicts with criterion 1 of CP11. Paragraph 10 of the report states 'there is no excessive encroachment away from original buildings'. Actually, this development is part of a continual encroachment of built form into the open countryside.

The application site and additional land was previously used for HGV parking without permission. Use was permitted in December 2018, with part of the land returned to pasture and a landscaping scheme introduced as conditions. The retrospective application noted parking arrangements at LFBP have always been generous to benefit occupiers. Massing of buildings to meet more business floorspace will displace HGV parking and will create pressure for further expansion. Expansion is already excessive according to criterion 2 of CP11. It also fails the test of criterion 3 of CP11 of 'not being within suitably located buildings etc.'. The proposal conflicts with CP11.

The NPPF, paragraph 83, states 'Planning Policies and decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas'. Carte blanche to any rural employment development is not permitted; it needs to be sustainable, the proposal isn't and should be refused."

J P Winkworth Ltd, applicant, provided the following submission in support of the application.

"Lambs Farm Business Park is an established high quality Business Park with some 70,000 sq.ft of business floorspace. This application is for 3 units to provide 5,000 sq.ft additional floorspace taking the total to 75,000 sq.ft. The height, design and colouring of the units is consistent throughout the Business Park. The proposed units are located

within the confines of the existing Business Park and will follow the same ethos of scale, design and colouring.

The Business Park has grown incrementally with new units being built to meet specific demand rather than on a speculative basis. The policy of consolidation within the existing Business Park has evolved from the views of the Local Plan Inspector several years ago who concluded that the site was not large enough to be categorised as a Core Employment Area but he recognised its importance in providing a range of smaller business units and supporting local employment. It has therefore been regarded as compliant with Policy CP11 and the qualitative element of Policy CP15.

The occupiers are predominantly local businesses, employing local people and run by owners or managers who live within five miles of the site.

The main features that make this Business Park such a success are:-

- meticulous maintenance of the site ensuring that it always has a prestigious appearance;
- high level of security including CCTV, security fencing and gates, together with lighting;
- a good local pool of labour
- spacious layout with ample room for cars and lorries to park and manoeuvre;
- informal, flexible and approachable management style with on-site management from an estate office.

There is an un-met need for employment space of this type, which is small-scale and high calibre.

The demand is continuing and there is always full occupancy and a constant waiting list for business units. Meeting this demand supports the local economy, increases the provision of jobs and is vital to the growth of the economy particularly following the effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Applicant is geared up to start the discharge of planning conditions immediately and to commence the development as soon as the necessary consents are in place.

The Officer's report deals very thoroughly with the relevant planning considerations. In particular it concludes that there is no highway objection or harm to the character of the countryside or wider area."

Stefan Fludger, case officer, advised the Committee that additional condition 9 was also recommended, which would require a revised travel plan to be submitted and approved by officers.

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Simon Weeks commented that this application site was located within a rural area, however the existing development site was fairly industrial with hard surfacing with

permission for HGV parking. Simon added that this application was situation wholly within the red line boundary, and there was no further expansion into the countryside proposed.

Chris Bowring sought clarification regarding the previously developed land associated with this application. Stefan Fludger stated that the current NPPF supported all forms of business expansion within the countryside. The Planning Policy officer had confirmed that this could be considered as previously developed land, currently with permission for HGV parking. This application was submitted to allow the applicant to expand their business by increasing their capacity.

Carl Doran queried why a previous application was refused in 2017, whilst a further similar application was then allowed in 2018 and now this application was also recommended for approval. Marcia Head, Development Management Team Leader, stated that the NPPF was revised between 2017 and 2018. The revised NPPF had a greater focus on presumption for business development and expansion in general. Carl Doran was of the opinion that the HGV parking should not have been allowed originally, and added that he was therefore minded to refuse this application.

Simon Weeks asked for clarification regarding expansion past the western red line boundary. Stefan Fludger stated that a previous application for expansion towards the west of the site was refused by the Inspector at appeal as they felt it was an encroachment on the countryside.

Pauline Jorgensen stated that she would like to see the travel plan to be provided prior to construction. Marcia Head stated that should this application be approved, officers could remind the applicant of Committee's concerns and ask that the travel plan be provided prior to construction.

Abdul Loyes sought clarification regarding expansion of the site over the years. Stefan Fludger stated that there had been expansion of the site over time, with each application having been determined on its own merits.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried how a HGV could turn on site when three HGVs were parked outside the proposed business units, whether two HGVs could pass each other on the access road, and what the most recent KSI (accident) data showed in the area. Stefan Fludger stated that the access road was very long and at points not wide enough to allow two HGVs to pass, however this application was unrelated to HGV parking. Stefan added that the Highways Officer had not raised an objection to the proposed loss of HGV parking. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that the applicant had carried out a tracking exercise which showed how HGVs would turn within the proposed modified site, and as it was a private site there was no risk of vehicles backing up to the public highway. Regarding the KSI data, Judy stated that in the last five years one minor accident had been recorded further along the public highway.

Malcolm Richards queried what specific uses the proposed buildings would house. Stefan Fludger stated that the use classes would be B1A (office space), B1B (research and development), B1C (light industrial processes) and B8 (storage or distribution). These uses were in line with the uses of the existing business park buildings.

Malcolm Richards was of the opinion that this application was a form of encroachment on the countryside, proposing office space which was available in other parts of the Borough

without having to destroy the countryside. Malcolm added that he was likely to reject this application.

RESOLVED That application number 200888 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 56 to 58, and additional condition 9 as recommended on the evening by the case officer.

7. APPLICATION NO.193392 - STAR WORKS, STAR LANE, KNOWL HILL

Proposal: Application to vary condition 7 of planning consent 153172 in order to extend the time for the deposit of engineering/restoration materials (inert waste) from 21 years from the date upon which the deposit operations commenced to 23 years, and to extend the time for the completion of the site's restoration from 22 years from the date upon which the deposit operations commenced to 24 years

Applicant: Mrs Veronique Bensadou, Grundon Waste Management Limited

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 87 to 118.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- An additional condition to allow for monitoring of site progress;
- Further clarification regarding how a consultation response from Maureen Hunt, Borough Councillor for RBWM Hurley and Walthams Ward, was considered and presented within the report;
- Further clarification regarding concerns about litter and smell, which should not be occurring from the subject site as it had now been capped;
- A further letter from the applicant outlining their confidence to be able to complete the site.

In line with the given deadlines, three public written submissions were received for this item. These submissions were circulated to Members in advance, and noted on the evening. The submissions as provided can be found below.

Barton Willmore, on behalf of Residents of Star Lane and Knowl Hill, provided the following submission in objection to this application.

"Barton Willmore submitted a detailed response to the planning application which we trust members have had the opportunity to read and digest.

Fundamentally, this objection focuses on the fact that the case Officer's report acknowledges the detrimental impact that the Star Works Site has on residential amenity, however there remains a reliance on planning conditions that are neither complied with nor enforced.

In allowing the original application at appeal, the Inspector identified that, notwithstanding the inconvenience likely to be caused by a site such as this (due to the proximity to residential dwellings), the disadvantages would be spasmodic and short lived, and must be set against the considerable long-term benefit.

The application currently before you, seeks to extend the time limit to 2023 to cease deposits of waste material, and 2024 to complete restoration. A total of 5 years beyond that envisaged by the Inspector when they referred to 'short term pain for long term gain'.

The Council, like the Inspector before them, have historically sought to rely on the ability to enforce against breaches of planning conditions to protect residential amenity; environment and highway safety, and it is noted that the same position has been adopted this time round. Your Officer refers consistently to the existence of Conditions which will protect residential amenity.

However, the fundamental point, is that to serve their purpose and be effective, the conditions must be enforced. The residents of Star Lane and Knowl Hill feel let down by the Council, who have consistently failed to enforce against clear breaches of conditions and have indicated that they are unable to do so; and also let down by the Applicants who have failed to comply with the conditions.

The Council have been made aware of breaches of planning conditions on many occasions over the years, and these continue to this day. Local residents have no confidence in the enforcement of conditions to protect their residential amenity, and therefore it is inappropriate to extend this situation any longer.

They reiterate the objections that have already been submitted on their behalf, and request in the strongest terms that this matter is brought to a close and this application be refused.”

Maureen Hunt, RBWM Ward Member for Hurley & Waltham Ward, provided the following submission in objection to the application.

“I hope Members have had the opportunity to read my email of 6th July as it contains very pertinent information of what Grundon have chosen NOT TO DO and is only related to this application for the restoration and not the B2 use on the whole site. I and Cllr Johnson have worked hard to get a solution for Grundon and the lack of inert material for restoration as stated in this application.

RBWM have offered enough inert material which complies with the criteria for restoration FREE to Grundon. All they have to do is collect it from a location in RBWM about 4.5 miles away.

They have chosen to REFUSE this offer. They cannot forecast the delivery of enough inert material over the next two years and have even mentioned to me there could be a further downturn in building due to a 2nd wave of Covid 19.

They inform us that with this extension the landfill restoration will be completed. That was said in 2016 when they gained permission for an extension of time. By asking for an extension of time, Grundon are not adhering to policies in the Berkshire Mineral Plan or the Waste Mineral Plan for Berkshire.

The cost of haulage is not a consideration for this Panel. They knew there was no stockpile of restoration material when they first gained permission for the Landfill. Grundon have failed to ensure they stockpiled for this over the years and have now REFUSED the help of RBWM. In good faith and for the benefit of the Green Belt and residents of Knowl Hill, they should reconsider the offer made.”

Veronique Bensadou, Interim Head of Estates and Senior Planner at Grundon (applicant), provided the following submission in support of the application.

“Landfilling at the Star Works site started in 1999. Under the current planning permission for the landfill site, the disposal of non-inert waste was to cease by January 2019, the disposal of inert material (soils) was to cease by January 2020, with the restoration of the site (tree planting and grass seeding) completed by January 2021.

The import of non-inert waste was completed during the course of 2018, with the last load of non-inert waste being deposited in April 2018, ahead of the January 2019 deadline. Over large parts of the site, the placing of inert soils has been completed and the landfill site is clearly progressing towards completion and full restoration. However, there are still areas that require completing.

The current planning application requests an extension to the life of the landfill so that we can continue to bring restoration soils to the site until January 2022 and complete the approved restoration scheme by January 2023 (2-year extension).

The site operates under various constraints imposed by planning conditions and in accordance with its Environmental Permit which is monitored by the Environment Agency. The Permit governs the day-to-day operation of the site and sets out pollution and environmental control measures. These controls and constraints are in place to protect the local environment and the amenity of the local area and residents. The areas of the landfill site that still require to be completed are the furthest away from the residential properties (those off Star Lane) as the areas closest to these properties have been completed and restored first. Also the vehicles delivering the soils to the landfill do not pass by any of the houses on Star Lane.

The alternative to the proposed extension of time, is for the restoration of the site to be curtailed prior to the approved levels being reached across the site. Even with a significant proportion of the site already restored, this would result in a landform which would not blend into the surrounding landscape in the way the approved scheme had been designed to achieve. This in turn, would have a long term and (effectively) permanent detrimental impact on the local landscape and the character of the area.

In addition to this, the systems in place to collect and manage the leachate and landfill gas were designed based on the landfill being completed and the restoration levels being achieved. Again, curtailing the restoration of the site prior to these levels being reached would have long term implications on these environmental controls and jeopardize how effectively and efficiently these systems are meant to operate.

In conclusion, officers have carefully considered the application proposals, and have determined that they accord to the local and national planning policy and recommended approval. For this reason and those I have outlined, I hope you will endorse this recommendation.”

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Simon Weeks commented that there were two parts to this site, with the subject application site having been capped and the other part of the site still being active. Simon added that the RBWM Ward Member and Maidenhead MP had made comments regarding the availability of inert waste from the RBWM. Simon commented that if refused, the site would be left in an unusual position where the land would remain scarred and it would not

be Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) responsibility to resolve. Should a refusal decision be appealed, a timescale of approximately twelve to fifteen months could be seen prior to an appeal being heard, during which time the site would remain operable. Simon commented that Members had received a briefing regarding this application due to the complex site history, in which a number of technical queries were answered and clarified

Chris Bowring queried what judgement Members could make regarding the offer, and rejection of, inert material. Graham Vaughan, case officer, stated that paragraph 7 of the officer report outlined that the applicant had reasons why they chose not to accept the offer of inert material. Graham added that it was not a material consideration to judge whether a business decision was a good decision.

Stephen Conway stated that if approved, the applicant could still engage in negotiations with RBWM to make efforts to infill the land sooner. Stephen added his sympathy with the concerns of the residents, and agreed with the summary of the situation as stated by Simon Weeks.

Simon Weeks proposed an informative, asking that the applicant enter into meaningful discussions with RBWM to make their best effort to take advantage of any available and suitable material in order to speed up the restoration of the subject site. This informative was unanimously agreed by Members present, and added to the list of informatives.

Carl Doran queried whether the applicant would be bound by the previous planning permission to restore the site should this application be refused. Simon Weeks stated that the current conditions could not be met in the permitted time, and WBC could not allow a breach of one condition so that another could be met. Graham Vaughan stated that if refused, work on the site would have to cease, which would leave the site in a very unusual and difficult situation.

Carl Doran queried what was left to do on site in terms of restoration, and whether a 1.75m level of soil would be suitable as opposed to the suggested 2m level. Graham Vaughan stated that the applicant had outlined that approximately three hectares of land was required to be infilled with soil, and trees were due to be planted during the next planting season. Suzi Coyne, WBC minerals and waste consultant, stated that a 2m level of soil was required to ensure that the roots of trees would not permeate through the cap.

Simon Weeks commented that many objections had been received regarding litter and smell at the site. Simon added that the subject application site was capped, and the other part of the site owed by the applicant, and not the subject of this application, could be the cause of these complaints.

Malcolm Richards queried how any potential enforcement at the site could be dealt with in future. Graham Vaughan stated that the new monitoring condition would allow WBC an insight into progress made on the site, which would give all concerned reassurance as to how close to completion the site was. This would also allow WBC to engage in earlier discussions with the applicant should progress be slower than expected.

A number of Members commented that they had a great deal of sympathy with residents, however refusing this application would leave the site scarred with little prospect of restoration.

RESOLVED That application number 193392 to approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 88 to 89, additional condition relating to site monitoring as set out in the Members' Update, and additional informative asking the applicant to engage in discussions with RBWM regarding the availability of suitable material.

8. APPLICATION NO.200856 - WINNERSH TRIANGLE CAR PARK, WHARF DALE ROAD, WINNERSH

Proposal: Full application for the proposed upgrade to the existing Park and Ride facility via the provision of a decked car park facility increasing parking by 104 spaces; provision of a new access to Winnersh Triangle Railway Station; improvements to the urban realm of the station forecourt, and associated works

Applicant: Highways and Transport, Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 119 to 146.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included further clarification relating to the number of electric vehicle charging spaces at the proposed development.

In line with the given deadlines, two public written submissions were received for this item. These submissions were circulated to Members in advance, and noted on the evening. The submissions as provided can be found below.

Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) Highways and Transport, applicant, provided the following submission in support of the application:

1 "The Scheme seeks to improve the Park and Ride facility at Winnersh Triangle Station by increasing the capacity of the car park to allow higher number of drivers to park and use rail and bus services from Winnersh Station into Reading, as well as other locations. The Scheme has been accepted by the Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership and their independent technical advisors;

2 In its present form, and with restricted parking capacity, the station cannot fulfil its potential both as a gateway to the local area and as a much-improved park and ride facility. The enhanced car park design will include spaces and charging points for electric vehicles which will help reduce the emissions that contribute to climate change. This will encourage increased use of electric vehicles given that the availability of charging points is a major consideration for purchasing electric vehicles;

3 Given that Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) have declared a "climate emergency", the Scheme will demonstrate the steps WBC is taking to reduce adverse environmental impacts and improve public health in the area, and to make WBC carbon neutral by 2030;

4 The Park and Ride facility will be complemented by station forecourt improvements in the form of a new access, turning head and urban realm enhancements. These elements of the Scheme would not only generate a number of strategic benefits, based on its own merits, but would also complement the car park enhancements. The improved access for buses would help the access and egress manoeuvres, thereby increasing the attractiveness of the bus park and ride;

5 There will be additional safety benefits associated with the new access arrangements (e.g. pedestrian movements between the business park and the station will not have to interact with buses and other vehicles accessing the forecourt). This would greatly enhance the perception of pedestrian safety at the station forecourt. The planting of new trees and an overall improvement in the ambience and appearance of the station approaches will also generate benefits for those using the station;

6 The Planning, Design and Access Statement assessed the Scheme against the NPPF and relevant local planning policies of the development plan. The Scheme implements the local aspirations of WBC with regard to the improvement of park and ride facilities at Winnersh Triangle Railway Station and accords fully with other local and national policies.”

Prue Bray and Paul Fishwick, Ward Members, provided the following submission in support of the application.

“We support this application because it:

- Contributes to reducing journeys by private car, and therefore helps both reduce congestion and the borough’s carbon footprint;
- Includes solar panels, again helping the borough’s carbon footprint;
- Provides extra parking capacity, which should help reduce problem parking on adjacent residential roads.

We welcome the increase in disabled parking provision from 8 to 20 spaces, and the increase in electric vehicle charging points from 4 to 48.

However, there are 3 spaces reserved for station staff at the moment, and this is being reduced to 2. We do not understand why this reduction is taking place, and ask for that 3rd space to be allocated so that station staff can continue to park.

We are disappointed that no parent and child spaces have been allocated. These extra-wide spaces make it much easier for people with young children to park and get their children out of the car. The provision of a few such spaces would have encouraged people with young children to use both the station and the park and ride bus.”

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Simon Weeks commented that it had been confirmed that chevron parking would not help in this particular instance. Simon added that the addition of photovoltaic panels should allow generation of power in excess of the requirements for the car park, including lighting and ticket machines. Simon clarified that passive electric vehicle charging meant that the infrastructure, such as wiring, had been laid underneath the spaces to allow for the above-ground charging device to be installed at a later date when required, thereby reducing the costs in the long term.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried whether a wheelchair or pushchair capable lift could be made part of this application, where the park and ride would be moving to during

construction, and where the disabled spaces were proposed to be located. Graham Vaughan, case officer, stated that there was a proposed lift to the decking included within the plans. Graham added that the disabled spaces could be seen on the plan on agenda page 145, highlighted in yellow. Pauline Jorgensen (Executive Member for Highways and Transport) stated that she had spoken to officers and was informed that the exact location for moving the park and ride had not yet been finalised. Rachelle asked that the Winnersh Ward Members be liaised with regarding this.

Malcolm Richards queried whether timings regarding the switching-off of lighting in the car park had been finalised. Graham Vaughan stated that the proposed lighting column timings had not yet been finalised.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether any additional vehicle movements could be managed both within the car park and on the public highway, and whether both portions of the scheme were funded to be delivered together, thereby avoiding potential safety issues. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that the scheme as shown had modified access to realign with the proposed new bus stop. Any additional traffic as a result of the proposed additional spaces could be accommodated within the highways network. Graham Vaughan stated that it was very likely that funding would be secured for the entirety of the scheme, however the individual elements of the scheme could be delivered independently of each other without sacrificing safety or accessibility.

Simon Weeks proposed an additional informative, asking that the applicant endeavour to deliver the entirety of the scheme together rather than in two separate phases. This was unanimously carried and added to the list of informatives.

Abdul Loyes sought clarification that no additional trees would be removed other than the 10 as set out in agenda page 133. Graham Vaughan stated that a tree survey had been undertaken on site, and 10 trees of moderate quality were due to be removed and replaced by 15 trees. No additional trees would be removed above the 10 proposed.

Carl Doran queried why the dedicated staff spaces on site had been reduced from 3 to 2 as part of these proposals. Graham Vaughan stated that there was not a significant demand from National Rail for these spaces, however there was an element of discretion and 3 spaces could be provided if the demand increased.

Stephen Conway queried why no parent and child parking bays were proposed to be provided. Judy Kelly stated that there were no parking standards requiring a particular amount of parent and child bays, and they were not particularly common at park and ride sites. Judy added that the design team had advised that they could consider this at the detailed design stage.

Pauline Jorgensen and Malcolm Richards commented that they did not want to reduce the overall parking capacity in favour of parent and child bays that were not in demand at similar sites.

Simon Weeks proposed an additional informative, asking the applicant to evaluate and consider whether there was a need for parent and child bays to be located on the ground floor. Support for this informative was not unanimous, however it was carried and added to the list of informatives.

RESOLVED That application number 200856 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 120 to 126, additional informative asking the scheme to be delivered in one phase, and additional informative asking the applicant to consider any need for parent and child bays to be delivered on the ground floor.

9. APPLICATION NO.200985 - CANTLEY PARK RECREATION GROUND, NORREYS

Proposal: Full application for the proposed construction of a new 3G Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) with floodlights; refurbishment of existing pavilion to provide new changing facilities, viewing balcony and ancillary café; improvements to existing grass pitches and associated works; provision of an additional 39 no. parking spaces in existing car park

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 147 to 184.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included forwarded responses of support from a variety of local groups, schools and trusts.

In line with the given deadlines, one public written submission was received for this item. This submission was circulated to Members in advance, and noted on the evening. The submission as provided can be found below.

Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), applicant, provided the following submission in support of the application.

"I write to present a strong case to the Planning Committee in relation to the Cantley Planning Application.

Cantley Pavilion is in dis-repair facility. Currently there are health and safety issues for residents and football clubs presently using the facilities. The pitches are in a poor condition.

The playing pitch strategy is to be finalised by January 2020 and is showing an increase in football teams within the Borough, currently 534 teams. Teams are travelling outside the borough to use football pitches, and winter training facilities, therefore an upgrade and 3G pitch is required.

Increasing provision for additional 3G pitches, this will also help towards the climate control action plan. Our teams will no longer need to travel outside the borough for external matches and training facilities. This will include a cycle shelter.

Parking is currently an issue as there is not sufficient parking on site to meet demand, cars are parking on roadside causing a potential risk, causing negative publicity for the council. By increasing, the parking by an additional 40 spaces and implementing a travel plan for the site.

New facilities/ benefits to our residents:

- New 3G pitch
- Upgrade sports pavilion and changing rooms
- New Café and social space
- Additional 40 car parking spaces
- New Artificial cricket wicket

- Upgrade the existing grass football pitches
- Destination play area
- Arts and culture events

Timeline:

Two phases, the first commencing in Winter 2020, maintaining the existing facilities while upgrading the pavilion, parking, new cricket wicket, café/social space and new 3G pitch and 40 additional car parking spaces. Phase 2 will be the upgrade of the grass pitches commencing spring 2021.

Climate control

WBC will contribute to the climate emergency plan, as the majority of local teams are currently travelling out of the borough.

To help the carbon footprint of the building, we are proposing to use an array of Photo Voltaic panels on the pavilion roof to generate electricity, this will then be stored on site in batteries and be used to power the new LED floodlights to the new AGP facility. All new lighting throughout the scheme will be LED. We are also looking to install a rainwater-harvesting tank under the new pitch to store water which can be used during dry periods.

I trust that the Planning Committee will consider the Planning Application having noted all the above points.”

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Simon Weeks commented that only two objections had been received related to this application, and these had been addressed within the officer report. Wokingham Town Council were broadly in support of the application as were the local Ward Members.

Malcolm Richards commented that any improvement to resident access to sport, health and wellbeing facilities were very positive. Malcolm added that the proposed 3G pitch would allow for greater year-round use, was part of the wider SDL improvements, and the scheme therefore had his full support.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether there was sufficient room for motorcycle parking on site. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that standards dictated 1 motorcycle space per 40 spaces for a D2 class facility. The scheme was proposing to provide 2 motorcycle spaces, 1 above standards. Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations, added that there was space within the wider site to accommodate any additional motorcycles.

A number of Members voiced their support for the scheme and the benefits that it would bring to the community.

RESOLVED That application number 200985 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 148 to 153.

10. APPLICATION NO.201050 - ALEXANDRA HOUSE, ALEXANDRA COURT, WOKINGHAM

Proposal: Full planning application for the change of use of night club on the ground floor of Alexandra House to a flexible mixed use comprising A1 (Retail), A2 (Financial and Professional Services), A3 (Cafes and Restaurants), A4 (Drinking Establishments), and/or

A5 (Hot Food Takeaways) and B1(a) (Office) plus changes to fenestration at ground floor.
Part retrospective

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 185 to 204.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included a correction to the date of consideration by the Committee.

No written public submissions were received for this item.

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Simon Weeks commented that this application sought no space increase, but instead greater flexibility to ensure that the building was fully utilised.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried whether there was any parking provision on site, and whether secure cycle parking could be provided on site. Natalie Jarman, case officer, stated that there was no parking provision associated with the site, however due to its town centre location there was nearby parking available. Natalie added that the upper two floors were already in operation as office accommodation.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey asked that an informative be added, stating that as the Borough Council encouraged cycling as a method of transportation the Committee asked that the applicant consider the provision of secure on site cycle storage. This was unanimously agreed and added to the list of informatives.

Malcolm Richards queried whether the current hours of use extending into the night would cease should the application be approved. Natalie Jarman confirmed that the current hours of use, related to night club usage, would be replaced by the hours of use associated with the proposals.

A number of Members commented on their support for this application, as it would give the Borough Council greater flexibility to help ensure that the building was fully utilised.

RESOLVED That application number 201050 be approve, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 186 to 188, and additional informative asking that the applicant consider the provision of secure on site cycle storage.

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