

# Agenda Item 46.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
201573	15.01.2020	Arborfield Newland	and Arborfield;

<b>Applicant</b>	
<b>Site Address</b>	Bound Oak Industrial Estate, Wokingham Lane, Arborfield, RG2 9PN
<b>Proposal</b>	Full application for the erection of 4No buildings for B1c,B2 and B8 industrial and commercial use with the addition of a sui generis Energy Centre comprising a Combined Heat and Power facility and a Lithium Ion Battery store in Unit 1 to include landscaping and access works, following demolition of the existing buildings.
<b>Type</b>	Full
<b>PS Category</b>	003
<b>Officer</b>	Jeanette Davey
<b>Reason for determination by committee</b>	Major application

<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 16 December 2020
<b>REPORT PREPARED BY</b>	Assistant Director – Place

<b>SUMMARY</b>
<p>The application relates to the redevelopment of the existing employment site to provide additional modern facilities. The proposals are compatible with the sensitive location, including the adjoining ancient woodland and local wildlife site status of the surrounding land, and the proposed conditions have been adapted and strengthened from standard conditions, in order to seek maximum protection for this sensitive site.</p> <p>Amended plans have been received which address highway objections raised by local residents. The Local Planning Authority has also secured greater control over aspects of the operation, including operating hours and noise levels which are not currently controlled and the re-imposition of a condition relating to outdoor storage.</p> <p>The site is located within the countryside. Although it leads to an increase in floorspace and built form within the countryside, it is an established business location largely surrounded by built form and any harm to the countryside is minimal. Subject to conditions, the scheme would be acceptable in relation to residential amenity, ecology and trees and landscaping.</p> <p>The proposal accords with the provisions of the NPPF, Core Strategy, MDD Local Plan and CEAP. Furthermore, the provision of the Energy Centre, with inclusion of the CHP facility and lithium ion battery store, shows a clear commitment to seeking to meet the provisions of national and local policy guidance, insofar as it relates to sustainable development.</p> <p>The proposal is therefore recommended for approval, subject to completion of a legal agreement and conditions.</p>

## PLANNING STATUS

- Countryside
- Ancient Woodlands Consultation
- Contaminated Land Consultation Zone
- Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
- Local Wildlife Site
- Tree Preservation Orders
- SSSI Impact Risk Zones
- Landfill Gas Consultation Zone
- Thames Basin Heaths SPA
- PRoW Within WB Consultation Zone
- Historic Flooding Points Consultation Zone
- Local Wildlife Sites Consultation Zone

## RECOMMENDATION

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

### **A - Completion of a legal agreement to secure:**

1. A financial contribution for the Traffic Regulation Order for yellow lines along Poperinghe Way, Wokingham, to be received prior to the commencement of development.
2. A financial contribution for monitoring of a Travel Plan which seeks to reduce the number and length of single car trips to be generated by the development of the Application Site, while supporting more sustainable forms of travel, reducing unnecessary business journeys and reducing the reliance on single-occupancy car travel.
3. Job creation comprising 5 x Community Skills Support, eg work experience or Construction Skills Certification Scheme training courses, 2 x apprenticeship starts and 2 x jobs created, or a sum in lieu of an Employment Skills Plan if the applicant / owner is unable to deliver the planning obligation.

If the Agreement is not completed within 3 months of the date of this resolution, Planning Permission will be refused unless the Operational Manager for Development Management in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Committee agree to a later date.

### **B - Conditions and informatives:**

#### *Conditions:*

#### **1. Timescale**

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

#### **Reason:**

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

2. **Approved drawings**

This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered:

Site Location Plan Dwg No 10926 PL\_001 dated 30.04.2020

Block Plans – Existing and Proposed Dwg No 10926 PL\_002A dated 23.09.2020

Site Plan – Existing Dwg No 10926 PL\_003 dated 30.04.2020

Site Plan – Proposed Dwg No 10926 PL\_004A dated 23.09.2020

Site Plan – Existing Overlay Dwg No 10926 PL\_005A dated 23.09.2020

Building 1 – Plans Dwg No 10926 PL\_101A dated 30.04.2020

Building 2 – Plans Dwg No 10926 PL\_201 dated 30.04.2020

Building 3 – Plans Dwg No 10926 PL\_301 dated 04.05.2020

Building 4 – Plans Dwg No 10926 PL\_401 dated 30.04.2020

Building 1 – Elevations Dwg No 10926 PL\_102A dated 30.04.2020

Building 2 – Elevations Dwg No 10926 PL\_202 dated 30.04.2020

Building 3 – Elevations Dwg No 10926 PL\_302 dated 04.05.2020

Building 4 – Elevations Dwg No 10926 PL\_402 dated 30.04.2020

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.

3. **Materials**

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

**Reason:**

To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP3

4. **Subdivision of Units**

The units hereby approved shall be retained in the unit sizes as identified in the approved plans and no two units or more shall be occupied by the same user.

**Reason:**

In order to continue to secure within the Borough a suitable proportion of commercial units for smaller occupiers and to seek a consistent approach to the original conditions applied in the permission granted under reference 44812 dated 15.03.1996.

5. **No External Business Use**

No storage, industrial or other business use shall take place outside of the buildings except the parking, manoeuvring, loading and unloading of vehicles.

**Reason:**

In order to safeguard the visual amenities of the area.  
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.

**6. Removal of materials**

All materials arising from the demolition of buildings on the site shall be re-used on the site where possible, or permanently removed from the site.

**Reason:**

In the interests of the amenity of the area and in order to seek a sustainable approach to the demolition.

Relevant policy: NPPF Paragraph 8, Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3, CP11, CP12 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policies TB01 and TB21.

**7. Permitted hours of Demolition and Construction**

No work relating to the development hereby approved, including works of demolition or preparation prior to building operations, shall take place other than between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 Saturdays nor at any time on Sundays or Bank or Public Holidays.

**Reason:**

To protect the occupiers of neighbouring properties from noise and disturbance outside the permitted hours during the construction period.

**8. Machinery Operating Times**

No machinery shall be operated and no process shall be carried out outside of the hours of 07:00-19:00 Mondays to Fridays (inclusive) and 09:00-13:00 Saturdays, nor at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.

**Reason:**

To safeguard residential amenities.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP3 and MDD Local Plan Policy CC06.

**9. Delivery Times**

No deliveries shall be taken in or dispatched from the site outside the hours of 07:00-19:00 Mondays to Saturdays nor at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.

**Reason:**

To safeguard residential amenities.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP3 and MDD Local Plan Policies CC06 and TB20.

**10. Parking Management Strategy**

Prior to the first occupation of the development, a Parking Management Strategy for the management of the parking arrangements shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submitted Parking Management Strategy shall include details of the management of all parking spaces and monitoring of inconsiderate parking within the site.

**Reason:**

To ensure satisfactory development in the interests of amenity and highway safety in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP6, CP13 and CP21 and MDDLDP policies CC07 and TB20.

#### **11. Parking and Turning to be approved**

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

##### **Reason:**

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, to provide 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.

#### **12. Cycle Parking**

Prior to the commencement 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.

#### **13. Construction method statement**

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

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

**Reason:**

In the interests of highway safety & convenience and neighbour amenities.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policies CP3 & CP6.

**14. Highway construction details**

Prior to the commencement of development, full details of the construction of roads and footways, including levels, widths, construction materials, depths of construction, surface water drainage and lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The roads and footways shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details to road base level before the development is occupied and the final wearing course will be provided within 3 months of occupation, unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:**

To ensure that roads and footpaths are constructed to a standard that would be suitable for adoption as publicly maintainable highway, in the interests of providing a functional, accessible and safe development.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policies CP3 & CP6.

**15. Mix of Uses**

The sui generis Energy Centre hereby permitted shall be contained within Unit 1 (as identified on the approved plans) only. The B1(c) use hereby permitted shall be limited to not more than 50% of the floorspace contained within Units 2 – 11 (as identified on the approved plans)

**Reason:**

To encourage a mix of uses and to ensure adequate parking to serve the site.

Relevant policy: NPPF Section 9 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy Policy CP6.

**16. Walking and Cycling**

Prior to the commencement of development, details of measures within the development to improve footway and cycleway routes that connect the development with A327 and Poperinghe Way shall be submitted for approval by the local planning authority. The measures shall be implemented through a S278 agreement, in accordance with the approved details, prior to the occupation of the first unit.

**Reason:**

In the interests of highway safety & convenience and neighbour amenities.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policies CP3 & CP6.

**17. Lighting**

Details of external lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before the development is occupied. The details shall include location, height, type, hours of operation, direction of light sources and intensity of illumination, including lux level predictions beyond the site boundary, for all external lighting strategies including details of lighting for all highways, cycleways, footpaths, public areas, non-residential buildings and residential areas beyond the site boundary.

The details shall also identify those areas that support light sensitive biodiversity and the mitigation measures to be included to prevent disturbance. No further external lighting shall be installed without the written approval of the local planning authority.

**Reason:**

In the interests of residential amenity and highway safety and to seek to protect habitat and species of principal importance.

Relevant policies: NPPF Section 15, Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3, CP6, CP7, CP11 and MDD Policies TB21 and TB23.

**18. Electric Vehicle Charging**

Prior to the commencement of development, an Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. This strategy shall include details relating to on-site electric vehicle charging infrastructure, including a plan showing at least 40% coverage of electric vehicle charging provision across the site in accordance with Appendix E of the WBC Living Streets: Highways Design Guide (2019), and details of installation of charging points and future proofing of the site. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed strategy thereafter.

**Reason:**

In order to ensure that secure electric vehicle charging facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC07.

**19. Ground and building levels**

No development shall take place until a measured survey of the site and a plan prepared to scale of not less than 1:500 showing details of existing and proposed finished ground levels (in relation to a fixed datum point) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, and the approved scheme shall be fully implemented prior to the occupation of the building(s).

**Reason:**

In order to ensure a satisfactory form of development relative to surrounding buildings and landscape.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB21.

**20. Details of boundary walls and fences**

Before the development hereby permitted is commenced, details of all boundary treatment(s) including proposed gates and boundary changes at the site entrance, shall first be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development or phased as agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be maintained in the approved form for so long as the development remains on the site.

**Reason:**

In the interests of amenity and highway safety.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3 and CP6

## 21. **Control of Noise**

The sound rating level (established in accordance with BS4142:2014) of any plant, machinery and equipment installed or operated in connection with this permission shall not exceed, at any time, the prevailing background sound level at the nearest residential or noise sensitive property.

If the plant, machinery or equipment is to be enclosed, details of the enclosure shall be sent to the local planning authority for their approval before the development commences.

### **Reason:**

To protect the occupants of nearby residential properties from noise.

## 22. **Contamination**

Unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority, development other than that required to be carried out as part of an approved scheme of remediation must not commence until conditions A to D (below) have been complied with. If unexpected contamination is found after development has begun, development must be halted on that part of the site affected by the unexpected contamination, to the extent specified by the Local Planning Authority in writing, until Condition D has been complied with in relation to that contamination.

### **A. Site Characterisation**

An investigation and risk assessment, in addition to any assessment provided with the planning application, must be completed in accordance with a scheme to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site. The contents of the scheme are subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons and a written report of the findings must be produced. The written report is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The report of the findings must include:

- (i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;
- (ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:
  - human health,
  - property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes,
  - adjoining land,
  - groundwaters and surface waters,
  - ecological systems,
  - archeological sites and ancient monuments;
- (iii) an appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option(s).

This must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's '*Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11*'.

### **B. Submission of Remediation Scheme**

A detailed remediation scheme, to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historic environment, must be prepared and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, timetable of works and site management procedures. The scheme must ensure that



the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

***C. Implementation of Approved Remediation Scheme***

The approved remediation scheme must be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of development other than that required to carry out remediation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority must be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the remediation scheme works. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

***D. Reporting of Unexpected Contamination***

In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified, it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of condition A, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with the requirements of condition B, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with condition D.

**Reason:**

To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

**23. Landscaping**

Prior to the commencement of the development, full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include, as appropriate, proposed finished floor levels or contours, means of enclosure, car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas, hard surfacing materials and minor artefacts and structure (e.g. furniture, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting, external services, etc). Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable.

All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of species, size and number as originally approved and permanently retained.

**Reason:**

In the interests of visual amenity.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policies CC03 and TB21.

**24. Retention of trees and shrubs**

No trees, shrubs or hedges within the site which are shown as being retained on the approved plans shall be felled, uprooted wilfully damaged or destroyed, cut back in any way or removed without previous written consent of the local planning authority; any trees, shrubs or hedges removed without consent or dying or being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within 5 years from the completion of the development hereby permitted shall be replaced with trees, shrubs or hedge plants of similar size and species unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.

**Reason:**

To secure the protection throughout the time that development is being carried out, of trees, shrubs and hedges growing within the site which are of amenity value to the area.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policies CC03 and TB21

**25. Protection of trees**

a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until an Arboricultural Method Statement and Scheme of Works which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent to the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. No development or other operations shall take place except in complete accordance with the details as so-approved (hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme).

b) No operations shall commence on site in connection with development hereby approved (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) until the tree protection works required by the Approved Scheme are in place on site.

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

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

**Reason:**

To secure the protection, throughout the time that the development is being carried out, of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of amenity value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policies CC03 and TB21.

#### **26. Biodiversity Enhancement**

Prior to the occupation of the development, details of biodiversity enhancements, to include five bird and ten bat boxes 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 be installed as approved within 12 months of occupation.

##### **Reason:**

To incorporate biodiversity in and around developments in accordance with Paragraph 175 of the NPPF.

#### **27. Control of environmental effects, including biodiversity, during construction**

No development [including demolition, groundworks, vegetation and site clearance] shall take place until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to control the environmental effects of the demolition and construction work has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall include details of and / or measures for:

- The control of dust, odour and other effluvia
- The control of noise (including noise from any piling and permitted working hours)
- The control of pests and other vermin (particularly during site clearance)
- The control of surface water run-off)
- The control of noise from delivery vehicles, and times when deliveries are accepted and when materials can be removed from the site
- Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities
- Practical measures to avoid or reduce impacts during construction, which may be provided as a set of method statements
- The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features
- The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works
- Responsible persons and lines of communication
- Measures for the control of invasive non-native species on site

Construction activity shall be carried out in accordance with the approved CEMP.

##### **Reason:**

In the interests of the amenities of the area and to minimise impacts on biodiversity in accordance with Paragraphs 170 and 175 of the NPPF.

#### **28. Drainage Strategy**

No development shall be commenced until a Detailed Drainage Strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by LPA. The Strategy should be supported by evidence of ground conditions and calculations to demonstrate that SuDS features have been sized to cater for runoff generated by 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change. Also calculations to show surface water runoff rates will be constrained to existing rates across all relevant return periods, i.e. Qbar, Q1, Q30 and Q100 with climate change. The Strategy shall include mitigation measures for the detailed drainage necessary to maintain ecological permeability across the site. The drainage scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. Where surface

water requires disposal off site (i.e. not infiltrated) the applicant must provide evidence of consent to discharge/connect through 3<sup>rd</sup> party land or to their network/system/watercourse.

**Reason:**

To ensure the development is provided with a satisfactory means of drainage and thereby preventing the risk of flooding whilst limiting the potential for wildlife to be trapped and therefore maintaining ecological permeability as per MDD policy TB23. It is important that these details are agreed prior to the commencement of development as any works on site could have implications for drainage in the locality.

Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy Policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policies CC09, CC10 and TB23.

**29. SuDS Maintenance Plan**

No development shall be put in to use/occupied until a SUDS maintenance plan for all SuDS/attenuation features and associated pipework has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved SUDS maintenance plan shall be implemented in full in accordance with the agreed terms and conditions.

**Reason:**

To ensure the continued operation and maintenance of drainage features serving the site and avoid flooding.

**30. CCTV Strategy**

A scheme of security lighting and CCTV shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development hereby approved is occupied. The details shall include the siting and the technical specification details of the cameras, direction of view and their appearance. The scheme shall be installed and be operational within 1 month of first occupation of the development. The scheme shall be retained for the life of the development.

**Reason:**

In the interests of the character and appearance of the area and security.

**31. Energy Statement**

The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the energy scheme details as agreed in 'Bound Oak Development - Energy Strategy Overview' dated June 2020. The scheme shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved plans and for the lifetime of the development unless otherwise agreed 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.

### 32. **BREEAM Level**

Unless agreed otherwise in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the new buildings shall achieve BREEAM level 'Very Good' 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

### 33. **Travel Plan**

Prior to the commencement 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.

#### *Informatives:*

#### 1. **Planning Permission Approved and Amendments Required**

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received. This planning application has been the subject of positive and proactive discussions with the applicant in terms of:

- a full pre-application process was undertaken by the applicant;
- amended plans being submitted by the applicant to overcome concerns relating to planning policy compliance;
- planning issues relating to ecology, trees and landscape;

The decision to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out in the NPPF, is considered to be a positive outcome of these discussions.

#### 2. **SuDS condition**

In connection with Conditions 28 and 29 of the permission, it is important that the SuDS proposal should be an integrated and multi-functional approach to ecosystem services and SuDS for both amenity and biodiversity, in accordance with the CIRIA guidance and the Wokingham SuDS Strategy (January 2017). Both guidance documents advocate that a SuDS train should start within very locally based treatments (site control), such as rain gardens, filter strips or swales, for example, which then lead to regional control features. There is space within the site to provide a much more naturalistic attenuation solution in association with appropriate planting and this will need to be considered in much more detail when a revised surface water strategy is submitted.

### **3. Mud on the road**

Adequate precautions shall be taken during the construction period to prevent the deposit of mud and similar debris on adjacent highways. For further information contact the Highway Authority on tel.: 0118 974 6000.

### **4. Works Affecting the Public Highway**

Any works/ events carried out by or on behalf of the developer affecting either a public highway or a prospectively maintainable highway (as defined under s.87 New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA)), shall be co-ordinated and licensed as required under NRSWA and the Traffic Management Act 2004 in order to minimise disruption to both pedestrian and vehicular users of the highway.

Any such works or events, and particularly those involving the connection of any utility to the site, must be co-ordinated by the developer in liaison with the Borough's Street Works team (0118 974 6302). This must take place AT LEAST three months in advance of the intended works, to ensure effective co-ordination with other works so as to minimise disruption.

### **5. Service Strip**

The applicant's attention is drawn to the presence of a c.2m wide service strip running adjacent to the surfaced roadway. The service strip forms part of the adopted public highway. It is an offence for any works to be undertaken within this service strip without express permission in writing from the highway authority. The Head of Technical Services at the Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham (0118 9746000) must be contacted for the approval of any such works.

### **6. Travel Plan**

The requisite Travel Plan would need to comply with the latest national and local guidance:

- 1) NPPF Section 4 (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.

### **7. Line Search Before U Dig**

Your attention is drawn to the response from Line Search Before U Dig, who have provided a 5 page response, details of which are included on the WBC website for this planning application, dated 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020 and labelled 'LSBUD enquiry confirmation'. They draw your attention to registered assets held by Gigaclear Ltd, Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks and SGN. This can be viewed at the following link: <https://planning.wokingham.gov.uk/FastWebPL/detail.asp?AltRef=201573&ApplicationNumber=201573&AddressPrefix=&Postcode=&KeywordSearch=&Submit=Search>.

#### 8. Scotia Gas Networks Ltd

Your attention is drawn to the response from Scotia Gas Networks Ltd, who have provided an extract from their mains records for your proposed work area, including the existence of gas pipes across the application site. This comprises a 24 page response, details of which are included on the WBC website for this planning application, dated 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020 and labelled 'SGN response'. This can be viewed at the following link:  
<https://planning.wokingham.gov.uk/FastWebPL/detail.asp?AltRef=201573&ApplicationNumber=201573&AddressPrefix=&Postcode=&KeywordSearch=&Submit=Search>.

#### 9. Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks

Your attention is drawn to the response from Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks, who have provided a 35 page response, details of which are included on the WBC website for this planning application, dated 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020 and labelled 'SSE Networks response'. This can be viewed at the following link:  
<https://planning.wokingham.gov.uk/FastWebPL/detail.asp?AltRef=201573&ApplicationNumber=201573&AddressPrefix=&Postcode=&KeywordSearch=&Submit=Search>.

#### 10. Gigaclear Ltd

Your attention is drawn to the response from Gigaclear Ltd, who have provided a 4 page response, details of which are included on the WBC website for this planning application, dated 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020 and labelled 'Gigaclear Ltd response'. This can be viewed at the following link:  
<https://planning.wokingham.gov.uk/FastWebPL/detail.asp?AltRef=201573&ApplicationNumber=201573&AddressPrefix=&Postcode=&KeywordSearch=&Submit=Search>.

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application Number	Proposal	Decision
05812	Mobile home	REFUSED 17.02.1977 Appeal dismissed.
23713	Bungalow and garage	REFUSED 23.04.1986
44811	Mobile home (retrospective)	REFUSED 07.09.1995
950004 (CLU(E)73)	Existing lawful certificate for the storage, collection, transportation and return of scaffold plant comprising scaffold boards, poles, clips and putt locks	GRANTED 27.11.1995 Expired 27.11.1998
44812	Use of agricultural buildings for B1(c) light industrial use, B2 general industrial use and B8 storage use for vintage vehicle restoration (retrospective)	GRANTED 15.03.1996 Conditioned to prevent outside storage, industrial or other business use (condition 2), no external lighting (condition 3) and to secure the retention of the unit sizes as identified and that no two units or more shall be occupied by

SO/2003/9974	Residential development with open space and access (Scoping Option)	the same user, in order to ensure that small units were provided in the light of Local Plan policies (condition 5) REPLIED 03.09.2003
O/2004/1646 O/2004/1647	Redevelopment for residential development of a density of 30-40 dwellings per hectare on 4.4 hectares, with open space, access, parking, landscaping and retention of substation	REFUSED 20.10.2004
190283	Demolition of all buildings (Prior Approval)	APPROVED 27.02.2019
190017	Proposed erection of industrial and commercial building with associated works and access from Poperinghe Way	REFUSED 07.03.2019

#### SUMMARY INFORMATION

Site Area	0.99ha
Previous land use(s) and floorspace(s)	B1, B2 and B8
Proposed floorspace of each use	1765sq.m.
Change in floorspace (+/-)	+1899sq.m.
Number of jobs created/lost	+37 (68 total)
Existing parking spaces	Not specified
Proposed parking spaces	78

#### CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue	No objection: covered by alternative legislation
Southern Gas Networks	No objection
SSE Power Distribution	No objection
Thames Water	No objection
WBC Biodiversity	No objection, subject to conditions
WBC Climate Emergency Strategy Officer	No objection, subject to conditions
WBC Crime Prevention	No objection, subject to conditions
WBC Drainage	No objection, subject to conditions
WBC Economic Prosperity and Place	No objection, subject to conditions
WBC Employment Skills	No objection, subject to S106 agreement
WBC Environmental Health	No objection, subject to conditions and covered by alternative legislation



WBC Highways	No objection, subject to conditions and 106 agreement
WBC Public Rights of Way	No objection
WBC Tree & Landscape	No objection, subject to conditions

## REPRESENTATIONS

### **Arborfield and Newland Parish Council:**

The Parish Council is supportive of this application and is grateful to the developer for engaging with us throughout the application process. However, we do have one major concern which the developer is aware of:

We are very concerned that the road layout from the A327 roundabout to the entrance of Bound Oak Industrial Park already has an unsafe pedestrian road crossing point for the public in general but, more specifically, the residents of the Poperinghe estate and children walking to and from the local schools and feel the increased traffic from this development will exacerbate this. The Parish Council has discussed this with the developer and representatives of the local residents and agree with the view the residents have that the foot pathway at the right hand side of Poperinghe Way (as you enter it) needs to be extended to the dropped kerb crossing point from the Byway. This would make for a far safer crossing point and, given that the small amount of land required to create this pathway extension is owned by Highways, we strongly request that this work is undertaken as a part of the redevelopment.

The Parish Council also feels that consideration should be given to squaring up the exit from the roundabout to reduce the speed of traffic exiting the roundabout into the Poperinghe estate, Bound Oak and the traveller site and that better signposting needs to be provided at the entrance to Poperinghe Way to identify that it is a housing estate and a cul-de-sac. The Parish Council also feels that the entrance to Poperinghe Way would benefit from double yellow lines to prevent parking that currently causes access difficulties for service and emergency vehicles.

### **Ward Member: Cllr Cowan:**

The new development would potentially have a beneficial environmental impact on the adjoining residents at Poperinghe Way (76 properties) who have suffered many cases of fly tipping and burning over several years causing the residents to suffer smoke inhalation.

Although an Abatement Notice has been served by the Principal Environmental Health Officer, Operational Response the burning and fly tipping has continued. The issues are all well documented in Wokingham Borough.

Poperinghe has vulnerable residents (adults and children) who have suffered medically as a direct result of these illegal activities.

New building with new tenants and improved leases could be a significant contributor in improving the health and well-being of the residents of Poperinghe Way.

### **Neighbours:**

16 responses have been received, all objecting to the proposal. However, two of those objections support the principle of redevelopment of the site. Objections relate to the following issues:

### **Highway issues**

Several objections have been received relating to the following highways issues.  
*For ease, highways responses to the issues raised follow the comments, in italics.*

#### **Proposed road layout**

- The give way needs to be kept as it is and not for residents to give way to the business park and also the community who live behind. You can't see the traffic coming round the corner from the roundabout and many vehicles already go on the wrong side of the road at high speeds and straight into Boundoak or the traveller site.

*The applicant is not going forward with the proposed change in road layout, which is welcomed by Highways.*

#### **Parking**

- Problem with cars being abandoned
- Many cars are parked on the bend at the top of the estate or in residential spaces, making it even more difficult and dangerous when entering or leaving

*The applicant has agreed to contribute to a Traffic Regulation Order for parking restrictions on Poperinghe Way. This will be included in the S106 agreement.*

#### **Capacity of the site to take extra traffic**

- With so many planned parking spaces, it seems impossible for lorries to be able to turn once in Bound Oak Industrial Estate. With a single in out access road, there would be a high level of congestion caused.
- The doubling of the floor space and increasing the number of people would no doubt cause overspill of parking into neighbouring residential areas.

*Highways is satisfied with the evidence submitted that there is sufficient space on site for vehicles to manoeuvre and that there is sufficient parking on site. A parking management plan has been secured by condition to manage parking on site and ensure no inconsiderate parking.*

#### **Highway Safety**

- Cars speed round off the roundabout all the time and the crossing is so unsafe
- Surely safety is paramount? Why don't you place speed humps along that area to force people to slow down?
- The speed limit of 30mph, which is the present speed limit of Poperinghe Way, should in fact be lowered to 10mph. It is quite ridiculous to allow vehicles to drive into the small and congested estate at speeds up to 30 miles per hour.

*The applicant is not going forward with the proposed change in road layout, which is welcomed by Highways.*

#### **Pedestrian Safety**

- I urge the planning committee to visit at peak times to see how dangerous it is to cross. I am in support of this application but please ensure it's not at the detriment of safety for Poperinghe Way residents.
- Children often play near the entrance to the estate and it is only a matter of time before someone is hurt or worse. I have lived on the estate since the houses were first built and one of the reasons for moving here was the peace and quiet.

- I am concerned about the proposed road layout. Currently it is very dangerous for pedestrians coming from Poperinghe Way to cross safely due to the bend in the road. With increased traffic turning into the Industrial Estate this will become even more precarious. There should be a marked pedestrian crossing ensuring the vehicles show consideration. Many young people walk from Poperinghe Way to Bohunt School and soon to be Farley Hill School and their safety should be the first concern of any developer or council.
- A site expansion of this size including 78 parking spaces would result in a potential increase to around 700-1000 traffic movements a week with the proposed road layout - this would increase risks to local residents.

*Pedestrian and cycle improvements to access the residential area and the A327 have been secured by condition.*

#### **Potential increase in traffic**

- There shall be more traffic flow because of this new business park and if it's to go ahead our comments and wishes should be fully taken into account
- The additional traffic from 77 cars during the time when children are crossing the road to go to school is a real safety concern
- Adverse highway impact - the current site supports low key business use. An expansion of the scale proposed would have a major impact on the residents of Poperinghe Way
- The proposed expansion of the site to such a degree would cause major traffic congestion

*Highways is satisfied that increase in traffic would not have an adverse impact on the highway network.*

#### **Environmental Health issues**

- Currently there is no restriction on opening hours in Boundoak Industrial Estate. We are often disturbed by the noise early in the mornings including on Saturdays. Please impose restricted hours on any new tenants. Please impose a ban on any fires.
- The redevelopment may disturb rats and push them into Poperinghe Way.
- Noise issues from increased traffic.
- Fly tipping and making fires

#### **Economic issues**

- Businesses choose to locate here at may not be able to find alternative premises.
- As a local employer we run a recognised apprenticeship scheme this opportunity and employment of existing apprentices would be lost if planning was approved.
- The businesses located at this site have made numerous improvements to their own units and invested large sums of capital which will be lost in the event of demolition.

#### **Other issues**

- A lithium battery store planned is a major health and safety hazard. Any explosion would result in Bound Oak tenants being cut off inside the estate with no access by the fire services.
- Privacy concerns because from Autumn onwards there is very little shielding from the top road.
- Inappropriate development in the countryside.

- Harm to the landscape and ecology.

**Support**

- No objection to the proposed buildings.

<b>PLANNING POLICY</b>		
National Policy	<b>NPPF</b>	National Planning Policy Framework
	<b>NPPG</b>	National Planning Policy Guidance
Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010	<b>CP1</b>	Sustainable Development
	<b>CP2</b>	Inclusive Communities
	<b>CP3</b>	General Principles for Development
	<b>CP4</b>	Infrastructure Requirements
	<b>CP6</b>	Managing Travel Demand
	<b>CP7</b>	Biodiversity
	<b>CP8</b>	Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
	<b>CP9</b>	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
	<b>CP11</b>	Proposals outside development limits (including countryside)
	<b>CP15</b>	Employment Development
Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	<b>CC01</b>	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	<b>CC02</b>	Development Limits
	<b>CC03</b>	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	<b>CC04</b>	Sustainable Design and Construction
	<b>CC05</b>	Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks
	<b>CC06</b>	Noise
	<b>CC07</b>	Parking
	<b>CC09</b>	Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)
	<b>CC10</b>	Sustainable Drainage
	<b>TB12</b>	Employment Skills Plan
	<b>TB20</b>	Service Arrangements and Deliveries for Employment and Retail Use
	<b>TB21</b>	Landscape Character
	<b>TB23</b>	Biodiversity and Development
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	<b>BDG</b>	Borough Design Guide
		Sustainable Design and Construction
		CIL Guidance + 123 List

		Arborfield Garrison SDL SPD
		Arborfield and Newland Village Design Statement
		Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan

## PLANNING ISSUES

### Site Description

1. The 0.99 hectare site is located on the western side of the A327/Eversley Road. It consists of two main areas of land. To the north-west, the main site comprises a collection of buildings, some of which have been converted from agriculture to industrial use. They are of modest scale with associated hardstanding. To the south east of the site, the land is undeveloped grassland, aside from access from Poperinghe Way.
2. The existing buildings date from the late 1980s / early 1990s and have approximately 1,775sq.m. of industrial floorspace. They are clad in corrugated metal, with no foundations and with flat and pitched roofs. All outside service areas are of concrete hardstanding. No formal parking areas exist. Mature landscaping lines the boundaries of the site.
3. The applicant's agent states that the site needs significant investment in order to secure the site's long-term future and viability. They state that renovation is not an option as there are no bearing structures / foundations on which to re-clad or improve the existing buildings. They conclude that the most cost-effective solution is the complete redevelopment of the site.
4. The site is the countryside but with an electricity substation and caravan park to the north and approximately 100 dwellings within a housing development to the south. The Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location lies 100m to the east.
5. The site is not designated as a Core Employment Area. However, it has a lawful use for Classes B1(c), B2 and B8 use under a permission granted on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1996 with PA reference 44812.
6. The southern and western boundaries of the site abut woodland, with the majority of this designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) (Long Copse (South) and Robin Hood Copse). The northern part of the LWS is designated as ancient woodland. This woodland and the trees on the northern boundary of the site adjacent to the electricity sub-station are now protected by TPO 1683/2019. The adjacent A327, Eversley Road, is designated as a Green Route. Byway ARBO 15 runs parallel to the southern boundary of the site, from which there are glimpsed views into the site. The ground level within the site is higher than the surrounding woodland by about 1.5-3 metres on the southern and western boundaries of the site, achieved by an embankment.
7. There are very limited views of the buildings within the site from Eversley Road due to the long access road into the main, north-west part of the site where the current buildings are located and due to its location within woodland. The land within the site and between the access road and the adjacent electricity sub-station is retained as open and undeveloped, with a line of Leyland cypress growing along the boundary

with the sub-station. This currently screens views of the sub-station from Eversley Road and within this part of the site itself.

### **Description of Development**

8. This proposal comprises the demolition of the existing industrial units and the redevelopment of the site with four new industrial buildings, split into 11 separate units. Ten units provided in three of the buildings are to be located within the existing developed site on a footprint which would be 148sq.m. greater than the existing buildings. The fourth building (Unit 1) will be located within the undeveloped grassland adjacent to the access point and have a new footprint of 166sq.m., resulting in a total additional footprint of 314sq.m. However, the net additional B-use employment floorspace would be significantly greater, at approximately 2,405sq.m., due to the provision of first floors within the units. The proposed unit sizes range in floorspace from 224sq.m. to 584sq.m.
9. The submitted Planning Statement states that the development of Unit 1, on previously undeveloped grassland, will help with site security at the entrance point and allow for natural surveillance.
10. Proposed materials are profiled metal with timber boarding at the entrance point and first floor area above the entrance. Roof pitches are proposed at 6 degrees, with height to the eaves at 7.5 metres, approximately one metre higher than the existing units. 78 parking spaces are proposed, to include 6 disabled spaces and 12 electric vehicle charging spaces. Four motorbike and 22 cycle spaces are proposed. Associated access works are proposed but the access itself would be retained as existing.
11. The agent's Planning Statement indicates that the proposed quantum of floorspace would generate an approximate 68 jobs: a net increase of 37 jobs.
12. Unit 1 is proposed to include an 'energy centre'. A Energy Strategy Overview, written by Aardvark EM Ltd and dated 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020, has been submitted as part of this application. It states that the energy centre contains the principal plant and equipment required for the scheme, namely the CHP unit, heat store and control functions. The Overview states that the energy centre would include the following:
  - Solar PV with an installed capacity across all suitable roof areas across the development of approximately 170kWp, estimated to generate approximately 162MWh of electricity per annum.
  - Battery storage of up to 8MWh capacity – this would have the ability to supply 8MW of electricity for up to one hour (or 4 MW for two hours, etc). It would primarily be charged by the photovoltaic panels on the business units, the CHP unit or by importing electricity from the grid.
  - Conventional natural gas-fired boiler as a back-up, for use when the CHP is unavailable or under maintenance.
  - Hot water store and circulation pumps.
  - EV charging points in the form of an upstand with cables attached will be installed for each of the four units situated on the development.
  - Whilst the proposed development would rely on an element of non-renewable energy source to provide energy for the CHP, greater capacity and flexibility in the local energy generation network has been considered to deliver services at the lowest possible carbon footprint.

13. The Overview concludes that the proposed development would constitute a sustainable energy-focused scheme that adds significantly to its sustainable characteristics, also enabling the development of infrastructure that can support local energy flexibility and smart grids.

14. For reference, the application was submitted prior to the changes within the Use Classes Order which took place with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020. As such, it is incumbent upon the local authority to consider the application within the use classes at the time of submission, as opposed to those which would be relevant at determination or completion of the scheme. Class E was introduced to the UCO on 1<sup>st</sup> September as a Commercial, Business and Service class and this would be the class into which the application would fall once completed. It includes B1 uses, provided that it can be carried out in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit.

15. It is important to note that, for Permitted Development rights and any restrictions therein, the Use Classes in effect prior to 1 September 2020 will be the ones used until the end of July 2021 (this is defined as the 'material period' in legislation). After July 2021 and on completion of the scheme, it is possible for the uses proposed within this application to change between all of those uses listed within Class E without the benefit of planning permission. This can create problems in the consideration of the application, not least with parking provision for industrial units against possible future operation. However, whilst making Members aware of this issue, it is not possible to override Government legislation and introduce restrictions to it without valid reasons. It should be noted that the rights exist for the B1 use on site at present and no such reasons are considered to exist as an exception to circumstance; however, condition 15 above does propose to restrict the overall level of B1 floorspace as a percentage of the site, in the interests of retaining a mix of uses and parking.

16. Notwithstanding being aware of possible future consequences for the uses of the site, an assessment of the scheme must continue based on what has been presented within the application.

### **Principle of Development**

17. The starting point for decision making is the development plan. Section 70[2] of the TCPA 1990 & Section 38[6] of the PCPA 2004 states that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The plan-led approach advocated by law is reinforced numerous times throughout the NPPF, including in Paragraph 12:

*'The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.'*

18. Policy CC01 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD) 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.

### ***Employment use of the site***

19. Planning application 44812 granted retrospective approval on 15 March 1996 for the use of the separate buildings across the site for Class B1(c), B2 and B8 use. As such, there is a lawful use on the site. Since that time, it would appear that an additional barn building has been constructed. The application seeks to intensify the use by increasing the total floor area. Whilst the majority of the proposed footprint lies within the existing footprint, the floor area increases through the introduction of first floors within each unit.
20. The Committee Report to accompany decision 44812 indicated that this development was accepted as an exception to circumstance, with it being important to provide small units of accommodation in the light of Local Plan policies. Condition 5 of the permission therefore sought to prevent the use of any two units by one occupier. This principle is carried through by proposed Condition 4.
21. Policy CP15 of the Core Strategy deals with Employment Development. It states that the redevelopment, refurbishment or minor extension of buildings in employment use will be acceptable in principle. It seeks to ensure that provision will be made for a range of sizes, types, quality and locations of premises and sites, in order to meet incubator / start-up, move on, expansion and investment accommodation needs and having regard to the needs of specific sectors of the business community.
22. The basis behind this is outlined in paragraph 4.70, which refers to an Employment Land Study (2006) which set out that the supply of floor space for industry and warehousing needs to increase by 51,000m<sup>2</sup> to meet forecast Class B use growth in the Borough over the Development Plan period to 2026. The Council's most recent Employment Land Monitoring Report for April 2013–March 2014 demonstrates that there was a net gain of 3,649m<sup>2</sup> of Class B use floor space in the Borough from 1 April 2006.
23. The NPPF also has an overriding emphasis for building on a strong, competitive economy, with Paragraph 80 stating that decisions 'should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.'
24. Paragraph 118 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs.
25. The existing industrial units have limitations because of their age, quality and configuration. The expansion of the site to accommodate enlarged and modernised Class B floor space is broadly in line with Policy CP15, particularly when it represents a net increase of more than 2,400sq.m. of floor area.

### **Character of the Area**

#### **26. *Impact upon the countryside and residential amenities***

Paragraph 170(b) of the NPPF requires that planning applications enhance the natural and local environment by 'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.'



27. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high quality design. Policy CP11 (2) also requires that the development does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings. Units 2-11 remain largely within the same footprint as the existing units. Whilst Unit 1 is closer to the entrance on a less developed part of the site, it is close to existing buildings and set in the context of the substation and caravan park to the north and residential development to the south and therefore it does not represent excessive encroachment or expansion into the countryside. Further, the scheme complies with Policy CP11 (3) which seeks environmental improvements.
28. In addition, RD1 and NR1 of the Borough Design Guide SPD state development should respond to key characteristics and features of the area. This is reinforced in other policies in the SPD, including:
- NR2 states that proposals should improve the area
  - NR3 requires a positive arrival impression
  - NR7 requires roofs to be designed to the context of the area, including visibility
  - NR9 states that large floorplates must be designed to minimise impact upon the character of the area.
29. Most of the buildings are in corrugated iron; some appear to be converted agricultural buildings. Two of the buildings have been more recently built, with a combination of materials including brick, timber, composite material cladding and profiled metal. Overall, the buildings retain the appearance of an industrial complex. Roofs are generally pitched but, again, there are also flat and mono-pitched roofs on the site. The site is well-screened by existing, mature landscaping. However, this includes an extensive mature hedgerow of leylandii trees.
30. Objections raised by neighbours relate to overdevelopment of the site due to the increase in floorspace and by being two storey in height. The total increase in height is from an existing height of approximately 6 metres to a proposed maximum of 7.5 metres. The increase is not considered to impact negatively on the character of the area, especially due to the existence of the mature treescape.
31. A neighbour objection relating to the loss of screening in the Autumn due to leaf fall is noted. However, the landscape surrounding the site is mature, the industrial units pre-existed the dwellings and the replacement buildings will be at least 45m from the closes dwelling and the proposed increase in height is by a maximum of 1.5m. As such, it is not considered that additional mitigation is required to address this issue.
32. Objections have been received relating to the potential for additional light pollution from the units and to seek to prevent unrestricted hours of operation. Objectors have also requested a ban on open fires. Condition 17, requiring a lighting strategy, has been adapted as a bespoke condition for this site, to address potential concerns about light pollution, as well as those relating to potential disturbance of wildlife. Conditions 8 and 9 restrict the hours of operation. A ban on open fires is more reasonably addressed via Environmental Health legislation, particularly via the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

33. Although it is not material to consideration of this application, the applicant has indicated a willingness to co-operate with local residents and allay any concerns about the future operations of the site.

34. It is therefore considered that the proposal meets with the policy provisions of the NPPF, Core Strategy and Borough Design Guide and, as such, the impact on the character of the area is acceptable.

### **Trees and Landscape**

35. The Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (November 2019) identifies the site as being within landscape character area L2 - Farley Hill Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills. This is generally a small scale undulating landscape enclosed by a mix of woodland and arable fields bounded by hedgerows. However there is pressure on the land for further built development, so the overall strategy is to conserve and enhance the existing wooded and secluded character of the area. Although the site is close to the edge of Landscape Character Area L2, the landscape around the site, particularly to the north and west are very sensitive to possible proposed changes.

36. There has been encroachment into the woodland by rubbish and other spoil that has been tipped down the embankment over a number of years. This is unsightly and it is having a detrimental impact on the existing trees within the woodland as well as impacting on the ecology of the LWS.

### **37. *Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment***

As part of the application, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) by CSA Environmental, dated May 2020, has been submitted to consider the effects of the proposed redevelopment of the site. Overall, the Borough Council's Tree and Landscape Officer is in agreement with the LVIA, which finds that the proposed development will not have any significant adverse impact on the existing character of the main part of the site. The officer considers that, in fact, there will be a minor beneficial effect from the proposals due to the proposed higher quality scheme that is now being proposed.

38. As the site is very well enclosed by existing vegetation that will be mostly retained and enhanced by additional planting, views into the site will also be very limited, apart from a narrow view from Eversley Road into the site towards Unit 1. However, the scheme proposals provide an opportunity to improve the site entrance, including additional tree planting, and therefore the visual effects from this particular receptor have been assessed as slight adverse, which is not significant.

39. There will not be any adverse effects on the surrounding protected ancient woodland to the south or west of the site as the proposed development will be sited entirely on the existing hard surfaced area footprint within this part of the site.

40. The proposals are accompanied by an Indicative Tree Planting Plan by Flac (38-1031.05) which has been provided to show where new and replacement tree planting can be accommodated within the site to further integrate the proposed development into the surrounding wooded landscape character. The submissions indicate that 4 category U and 60 category C trees would be removed as a result of the scheme; however, 32 larger specimen trees and 50 smaller trees will be planted in replacement, a net increase of 18. This is only indicative and a full and detailed

landscape scheme, including a net increase of at least 18 trees across the site will be provided at a later stage if the application is approved.

41. The Indicative Tree Planting Plan indicates a possible planting solution along the north western boundary adjacent to Unit 1, where it is proposed to remove the line of outgrown and failing Leyland cypress trees (to be discussed further as part of the Arboricultural Information section). The reduction in size of Unit 1 and its repositioning further from the boundary will enable sufficient space to be provided to allow for more appropriate native replacement and additional tree planting in this area which will, over time, enhance the wider landscape character in accordance with policies CC03 and TB21. The removal of the Leyland cypress trees with the associated replacement tree planting is assessed as part of the LVIA. Initially there would be a Moderate Adverse effect from this change, however over time as the new planting matures it will create a strong mixed species screen which will be in keeping with the local landscape character, so therefore the effect following planting will be of benefit.

42. **Arboricultural Information**

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (CC38-1031) dated May 2020 and accompanying Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Plan, Indicative Tree Planting Plan, Tree Protection Plans for both Demolition and Construction have been submitted with the application to identify the existing trees within and adjacent to the site and the possible impact of the proposed development on the trees.

43. The majority of trees on the site boundaries are now being shown to be retained unless they are small insignificant trees, those trees in poor condition or the group of Leyland cypress. The protected ancient woodland will not be affected by the proposals as the development will be constructed on the existing hard surfaced footprint which is raised above the surrounding ground level of the woodland, but also the units are now located further from the site boundaries.

44. In previous discussions with the applicants, the Tree and Landscape Officer has been quite resistant to the removal of the Leyland cypress group, as the trees currently form a landscape buffer to the electricity substation and are a landscape feature (although not native) within the site, hence why they were included within the wider woodland TPO when made. Also it was clear from previous layouts that there was insufficient space along the boundary for appropriate replacement native planting. However the layout for this application now shows Unit 1 and its associated parking sufficient distance from the boundary to allow a much greater quantum of planting along the boundary with the electricity sub-station. The new planting will be protected by the existing TPO. There is therefore now no objection to the removal of the Leyland cypress trees as the replacement planting (full details to be agreed) will form a robust mixed species screen, in keeping with the local landscape character.

45. **Drainage Strategy**

The Drainage Strategy drawing indicates that the majority of the site will be drained via underground attenuation tanks within the parking areas or access roads; this doesn't impact on any root protection areas of trees to be retained. The layout drawing indicates that the parking bays to the north of Unit 11, running along the site boundary, would be grasscrete or similar, to reduce the area of hard surfacing adjacent to the woodland.

46. The drainage for catchment 2 relies on an end of pipe solution into a heavily engineered attenuation basin. It is important that the SuDS proposal should be an integrated and multi-functional approach to ecosystem services and SuDS for both amenity and biodiversity, in accordance with the CIRIA guidance and the Wokingham SuDS Strategy (January 2017). Both guidance documents advocate that a SuDS treatment train should start within very locally based treatments (site control), such as rain gardens, filter strips or swales for example which then lead to regional control features. There is space within the site to provide a much more naturalistic attenuation solution in association with appropriate planting and this will need to be considered in much more detail.

### **Crime Prevention**

47. Repeated incidents of anti-social behaviour around the site are noted. Whilst much of this cannot be attributed to the site itself, in order to create safe, secure and appropriately accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion, a condition is included (30) to provide for security lighting and CCTV.

### **Highway Matters**

48. The TRICS rates used in the assessment are higher than those adopted for the Borough's strategic transport model which is welcome, and the traffic generated by this proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the highway network. Officers have requested additional modelling as well as the junction geometries, which have been submitted and are acceptable. The application proposes to use the existing Poperinghe Way access, which is acceptable and able to accommodate additional movements.

49. The split of B use floor space across the site could vary according to the users. In such situations, it is considered appropriate to calculate the range of parking according to the highest and lowest scenarios. In this respect, the parking standards would require 139 spaces for a solely B1 use given the proposed floor space, 84 spaces for solely B2 or 21 spaces for solely B8. Taking the average of 80, it is considered that the 79 proposed spaces would be appropriate.

50. The Highways Officer has stated that the proposals for parking, including disabled parking, active and passive electric vehicle charging spaces, motor cycle parking, cycle parking, swept paths of articulated lorries and junction geometries are acceptable, subject to conditions as required. Those recommended include conditions to secure details relating to surfacing for pedestrians, signage, double yellow lines, footpath improvements, a framework demolition and a construction method statement. Through a legal agreement, it is proposed to require a contribution towards a TRO to introduce yellow lines and a framework travel plan in the interests of highway safety and sustainability.

51. In summary, although a number of objections have been received relating to existing highways issues, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and to offer improvements in relation to parking and highway safety in the vicinity of the site, subject to a legal agreement and conditions.

## **Ecology**

52. Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy and Policy TB23 of the MDD Local Plan require the incorporation of new biodiversity features, buffers between habitats and species of importance and integration with the wider green infrastructure network.
53. Paragraph 175 of the NPPF states that opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.
54. The Borough Council's Ecologist states that, whilst the ecological report submitted (Aspect Ecology, ref: 5449 EcoAp vf /AH/RR, December 2018) is based on a survey conducted two years ago in November 2018, the findings remain relevant and there is likely to be limited change to the condition of the site.

## ***Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Site***

55. The ecological appraisal correctly identifies that the site is immediately adjacent to a woodland local wildlife site, which is in part recognised as ancient woodland in the Natural England inventory. The Council's Ecologist agrees that the redevelopment would lead to a betterment in terms of the stand-off of units 7 and 8 from the ancient woodland and use of grasscrete along the western edge for the parking bays. The main concern regarding the ancient woodland and local wildlife site is picked up in the ecological assessment with a recommended mitigation measure (MM5) for a sensitive lighting strategy for the proposed development. A pre-commencement condition is proposed to secure a revised lighting strategy to be suitable for light sensitive biodiversity (where the surrounding woodland is considered a sensitive receptor). This is proposed as Condition 17, combined with lighting requirements from Environmental Health and Highways.

## ***Protected Species***

56. The Borough Council's Ecologist states agrees that the current buildings proposed for demolition are mainly of negligible bat roost potential and mitigation measures three and four (MM3 and MM4) recommended in the ecological assessment, if secured by condition (proposed as elements of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) condition), are sufficient for the local planning authority to conclude that favourable conservation status of the protected species will be maintained. This approach could also be applied for badgers, breeding birds and invasive species, as recommended in the submitted report.

## ***Drainage Strategy and Ecological Permeability***

57. Whilst the risk to great crested newts might be negligible, the Council's Ecologist notes that the current drainage strategy appears to include gully pots and an underground pipe network to collect and convey water. There is a risk of trapping small animals in gully pots and so the drainage strategy may come in to conflict with the ecological permeability requirement within policy TB23 of the adopted Managing Development Delivery document. This risk has not been explicitly addressed within the ecological assessment submitted but can be resolved within the detail for the drainage strategy, via the proposed pre-commencement condition 28.

## ***Biodiversity Enhancement***

58. The ecological assessment was written in 2018 and the approach to demonstrating net gain for biodiversity – as expected per paragraph 170 of the NPPF – has developed with the current availability of a Defra Metric 2.0 biodiversity impact

assessment calculator (BIAC) in a beta version, to be finalised and made mandatory to use with the passing of the Environment Bill.

59. The Council's Ecologist recommends a pre-commencement condition to secure details of ecological improvements in the form of a number bat boxes around the site in an enhancement strategy (Condition 26).

***Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBH SPA)***

60. The Borough Council's Ecologist is of the view that the site is sufficiently remote from the TBH SPA that the proposal is unlikely to result in a net increase in recreational visits to it. In addition, it is a pre-existing development and does not include dwellings. As such, an Appropriate Assessment in respect of the TBH SPA is not required for this application.

**Environmental Health matters**

61. The Environmental Health Officer (EHO) considered the application against the following concerns:

- Noise
- Contaminated land
- Air Quality
- Lighting
- Construction and demolition impact

The EHO confirmed, following further consultation and representations from the agent, that these issues can be addressed by condition.

62. Some concerns have been raised by local residents, in particular, the health and safety issues surrounding the installation of the CHP unit. The applicant's agent states that such facilities are heavily regulated, particularly for fire / building regulations as well as by the power companies and National Grid. He states that such organisations will guide and agree the precise details in the lead-up to construction, and comments received from 66. The Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) confirm this.
63. Concern was also raised by local residents about fires which have occurred at the site. Although not relevant to consideration of this scheme, the applicant's agent has responded by stating that it is the intention of the applicant to have clauses in leases to prevent such activities from taking place which will, together with Environmental Health controls and regulations, ensure that such activities do not occur in the future. It is also noted that one of the objectors, as an occupier of Boundoak, has stated that the fires are outside of the estate boundary and premises.
64. It is worth re-iterating that one of the purposes of bringing forward Unit 1 adjacent to the entrance has been declared by the applicant as being to act as an additional means of site security, as a means of deterring anti-social behaviour and fly tipping which are currently experienced and a condition is proposed requiring additional security measures in the form of lighting and CCTV.

**Health and Safety issues**

65. An objection has been received from a neighbour, relating to the proposal to install a lithium battery in the energy centre.

66. The RBFRS Fire Safety Inspecting Officer has responded to this objection, stating that lithium batteries have been known to explode due to the nature of the components used to make them. These batteries can cause quite a bang, especially when oxygen is introduced into the chemical reaction. However, he continues by stating that lithium batteries are a well-established form of powering appliances, and are found in many day-to-day items from phones, laptops, tools etc. and are generally fairly stable to use, with little risk of an explosion. As long as the lithium battery store is built to the correct specifications and fire resistance, and that the batteries are stored correctly away from combustible materials, any explosion should remain isolated and be instantaneous. The correct level of fire alarm system, having a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment, and having a good management system in place, are all elements which will help reduce the chances of a fire from happening. RBFRS would provide this advice in any correspondence to the agent and explain that the Fire Safety Order would only apply once the build is complete and in use. At this stage, he states that they would check on areas like the battery store, to ensure that all safety measures for the premises are correct and, if not, provide guidance on how to improve them.

67. This response provides assurance that the issue raised is dealt with to a satisfactory level outside of planning regulations and, as such, no objection is raised on health and safety grounds.

#### **Drainage**

68. The site and access are located within Flood Zone 1. Policy CC09 of the MDD Local Plan requires consideration of flood risk from historic flooding. Policy CC10 of the MDD requires sustainable drainage methods and the minimisation of surface water flow.

69. The Borough Council's Drainage Engineer has responded to consultation as follows: The site is situated principally within flood zone 1. The submitted drainage drawing no. 18-098 / 300 provided good information, but does not completely satisfy the strategy developed for surface water runoff generated from the proposed development. More information is required, including the following:

- Groundwater data confirming seasonal high groundwater levels.
- Calculations to demonstrate that any SuDS features have been sized to cater for runoff generated by the 1 in 100 year flood event with a 40% allowance for climate change.
- Calculations to show how surface water runoff rates will be constrained to existing rates across all of the relevant return periods, i.e. Qbar, Q1, Q30 and Q100 with climate change.
- Details demonstrating which SuDS application has been proposed and how that SuDS for this development would be managed throughout the lifespan of the development and who will be responsible for maintenance.

70. The Council's Drainage Engineer is satisfied that these requirements can be secured by condition (28).

#### **Employment Skills Plan**

71. Policy TB12 of the MDD Local Plan requires planning applications for all major development (both commercial and residential) in Wokingham Borough to submit an Employment Skills Plan (ESP) with a supporting method statement.

72. The Borough Council's ESP Policy Officer seeks a S106 agreement to secure job creation comprising 5 x Community Skills Support, eg work experience or Construction Skills Certification Scheme training courses, 2 x apprenticeship starts and 2 x jobs created. Alternately, a sum in lieu of an ESP can be provided if the applicant / owner is unable to deliver the planning obligation. The requirement for a S106 has been included in the recommendation.

### **Public Rights of Way**

73. Arborfield Byway 15 runs to the south of this site. This route has also been identified as part of the Greenways Route F. The Borough Council's Green Infrastructure Manager stated that its upgrade would ideally complement the measures and aims of the plan, to encourage modal shift to walking and cycling. However, the route is outside of the site edged red and the scheme would not place noticeable demands in this route; as such, the requested improvements cannot be required of the owner as part of this application.

### **Sustainable Development**

74. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF seeks to achieve sustainable development. Core Strategy Policy CP1 requires development to contribute towards the goal of reaching zero-carbon development by including appropriate on-site renewable energy features and minimising energy and water consumption, by measures, including the layout and orientation, building form, design and construction and microclimate, so as to minimise carbon dioxide emissions.
75. Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD require sustainable design and R21 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that new development contribute to environmental sustainability and the mitigation of climate change.
76. Policy CC05 of the MDD Local Plan establishes that planning permission will only be granted for proposals that deliver a minimum 10% reduction in carbon emissions through renewable energy or low carbon technology where the development is for non-residential proposals of more than 1,000 sq. m gross floor space.
77. Section 5 of the Borough Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) states that the priority areas of focus to reduce carbon dioxide emissions include tackling carbon dioxide emissions from transport, generating renewable energy, planting more trees and other green foliage and encouraging behaviour change.
78. The Borough Council's Climate Emergency Strategy Officer has reviewed the proposals, in particular for the Energy Centre within Unit 1. She considers that the Energy Strategy Overview makes a commitment to CP1 and meets Policy CC05 of the MDD Local Plan and concludes that, on this basis, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with the policy requirements.
79. Turning to sustainability on traffic and transport grounds, Policies CP1, CP6 and CP11 of the Core Strategy permit development where it is based on sustainable credentials in terms of access to local facilities and services and the promotion of sustainable transport. The site exhibits limited sustainability credentials, with it located about 800m from a regular bus service. However, given that there is an existing lawful Class B use on the site, the expansion of the industrial complex is not opposed on sustainability grounds. A Travel Plan was also submitted with the



application, which is generally acceptable and is recommended to be secured through a S106 agreement.

### **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. Reference has been made to vulnerable adults and children in the vicinity of the site who suffer from issues at the moment; however, the application is considered acceptable and offer the opportunities for improvements e.g. through the implementation of a CCTV scheme. Aside from this, 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 application relates to the redevelopment of the existing employment site to provide additional modern facilities. The proposals are compatible with the sensitive location, including the adjoining ancient woodland and local wildlife site status of the surrounding land, and the proposed conditions have been adapted and strengthened from standard conditions, in order to seek maximum protection for this sensitive site.

Amended plans have been received which address highway objections raised by local residents. The Local Planning Authority has also secured greater control over aspects of the operation, including operating hours and noise levels which are not currently controlled and the re-imposition of a condition relating to outdoor storage.

The site is located within the countryside. Although it leads to an increase in floorspace and built form within the countryside, it is an established business location largely surrounded by built form and any harm to the countryside is minimal. Subject to conditions, the scheme would be acceptable in relation to residential amenity, ecology and trees and landscaping.

The proposal accords with the provisions of the NPPF, Core Strategy, MDD Local Plan and CEAP. Furthermore, the provision of the Energy Centre, with inclusion of the CHP facility and lithium ion battery store, shows a clear commitment to seeking to meet the provisions of national and local policy guidance, insofar as it relates to sustainable development.

The proposal is therefore recommended for approval, subject to completion of a legal agreement and conditions.

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