

Agenda Item 57.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
202106	17/02/2021	Charvil	Charvil;

Applicant	Mr Donald MacDonald, Loddon District Scouts
Site Address	Paddicks Patch, Waingels Road, Charvil, RG10 0UA
Proposal	Full Planning application for the proposed erection of new meeting hall following demolition of existing meeting hall, relocation of three metal storage containers, plus car park improvements with the installation of a cycle stand.
Type	Full
Officer	Senjuti Manna
Reason for determination by committee	Major application (site area > 1 Ha)

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 10 February 2021
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Place

SUMMARY
<p>Paddick's Patch is the district headquarters of Loddon District Scouts group. It is located within the ancient woodlands of a Local Wildlife Site known as Norris' Copse Bird Sanctuary. The site is normally (without pandemic restrictions) used for meetings of various Scouting groups in the Loddon District during weekday evenings and for camps and other special activities on the site during weekends. The site currently includes a meeting hall and three steel storage containers as well as various activity equipment.</p> <p>The proposal is for the erection of a new meeting hall and storage facilities near the site entrance and improvement of parking area following demolition of existing meeting hall and storage containers. This will not result in any change in the existing land use and is acceptable in principle. The new meeting hall would be located closer to the main entrance gate and would be approximately 34% larger than the existing building in terms of footprint and 51% larger in volume. Whilst the proposal would result in expansion of development away from the original building, contrary to policy CP11, in this instance it is considered acceptable since the proposal includes demolition of the existing building, secured by a condition, and as a result will not result in spread of development within countryside. The re-siting of the hall would be acceptable since the proposal would result in more compact form of development closer to the main entrance to the site as well as due to the presence of mature trees along the front boundary which will partially obscure the new building. Whilst the proposed volume increase would be slightly more than the recommended 50%, in this instance it is considered acceptable since the new building would not appear as an intrusive feature within the existing street scene.</p> <p>The site is located within an ancient woodland and local wildlife site. An Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) including tree constraints plan has been submitted to support the application. The WBC Trees and Landscape officer has reviewed the submitted information and recommended approval subject to conditions. Additionally, an ecological assessment report has been provided which is acceptable. The Council's ecology officer has commented that subject to conditions securing appropriate ecological protection and enhancement, the proposal would not have any detrimental impact on the ancient woodland and the local wildlife site.</p>

It is proposed to retain the existing meeting hall during the construction of the replacement building in order to facilitate the continued use of the site by the Scouts groups. This is considered acceptable. However, a condition is included requiring the original hall to be demolished and all materials removed from the site prior to the occupation of the replacement hall since retention of both halls within this countryside location will result in unacceptable urbanisation impact.

There are no objections to the proposal in terms of neighbour amenity, heritage, environmental health, fire safety and archaeology grounds. The application is accordingly recommended for approval subject to conditions for the reasons set out in this report.

PLANNING STATUS

- Designated Countryside
- Local Wildlife Site (Norris's Copse Bird Sanctuary)
- Ancient Woodland
- Radon Affected Area
- Contaminated Land Consultation Zone
- Landfill Gas Consultation Zone
- Groundwater Consultation Zone 3
- Heathrow Aerodrome Consultation Zone
- Tree Preservation Order TPO-0028-1971 (area TPO)
- SSSI Impact Risk Zone
- Unclassified Road
- Landscape Character Assessment Area J4: Settled and Farmed Clay

RECOMMENDATION

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

A. 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 details

This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered 201802/09A Location Plan; 201802/11 Proposed Site Plan; 201802/03 A Proposed Floor Plan and Elevations; 201802/04 Building Foundation Details; 201802/08 Existing Three Metal Storage Containers; Planning Statement; Design and Access Statement; and Ecological Assessment received by the local planning authority on 17 August 2020; Updated Arboricultural Method Statement; and HTS-

TPP-01C Tree Protection Plan received by the local planning authority on 21 December 2020 and drawing numbered 201802.06.C Proposed Building and Car Park Plan received by the local planning authority on 15 January 2021. 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. Drainage details

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved a drainage scheme shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage scheme shall include:

- BRE 365 test results demonstrating whether infiltration is achievable or not.
- Calculations demonstrating the performance of soakaways.
- A drainage strategy plan indicating the location and sizing of SuDS features, with the base of any SuDS features located at least 1m above the seasonal high-water table level.
- Details demonstrating how any SuDS for this development would be managed throughout the lifespan of the development and who will be responsible for maintenance

The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development and shall be maintained in the approved form for as long as the development remains on the site.

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

4. 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.

5. Protection of trees

- a) No development or other operations shall take place except in complete accordance with the Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) dated June 2020 and updated December 2020 and Tree Constraints Plan (HTS-TPP-01C) dated 18/12/20 (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.

6. Demolition required

The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the existing structure(s) shown to be demolished on the approved plans have been so demolished and all materials arising from the demolition of buildings have been permanently removed from the site.

Reason: In the interest of the amenity of the designated Countryside. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3, and CP11, and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

7. External materials

The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby approved shall be those specified in the application form and approved drawings 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 the external appearance of the building is satisfactory. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.

8. Parking and turning space to be provided

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

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

9. Cycle parking

Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted details of secure and covered bicycle storage/ parking facilities for the occupants of [and visitors to] the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The cycle storage/ parking shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved before occupation of the development hereby permitted, and shall be permanently retained in the approved form for the parking of bicycles and used for no other purpose.

Reason: In order to ensure that secure weather-proof bicycle parking facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 9 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

10. Access surfacing

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

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

11. Access to be widened

Development shall not be occupied until the access has been widened in accordance with the approved drawing numbered 201802.06.C Proposed Building and Car Park Plan.

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

12. Gates

Notwithstanding the approved plans and provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no gates or barriers shall be erected unless set back a distance of at least 5 metres from the carriageway edge and so as to open away from the highway.

Reason: To ensure that vehicles do not obstruct the highway whilst waiting for gates or barriers to be opened or closed, in the interests of road safety. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

13. External lighting

Prior to occupation, an external lighting design strategy for biodiversity to cover the meeting hall, car park, and storage areas shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall:

- a) Identify the ecological receptors on the site that are sensitive to artificial lighting; and
- b) Show how and where external lighting will be installed to adequately mitigate the risk to these ecological receptors.

All external lightings shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the strategy and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy.

Reason: To avoid and mitigate the deterioration of habitat of principal importance and maintain the integrity of a Local Wildlife Site in line with Core Strategy policy CP7.

14. Positive conservation management / Biodiversity Net Gain

A Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) detailing the means by which the Local Wildlife Site shall receive positive conservation management shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by, the local planning authority prior to occupation of the new meeting hall. The content of the LEMP shall include the following:

- a) Description and ecological evaluation of the site;
- b) Aims and objectives of management;
- c) Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives; and
- d) Prescriptions for management actions for the following five year period.

The approved plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details thereafter.

Reason: To minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity as part of a coherent ecological network, as per the NPPF and Core Strategy policy CP7 and Managing Development Delivery policy TB23.

15. Protected species mitigation

Works are to be carried out in full accordance with the mitigation strategies for protected species given in section 4 of the submitted Ecological Assessment report (GS Ecology, ref: ECO2613b, August 2020) unless otherwise agreed in writing by the council.

Reason: To ensure that reptiles, breeding birds and badgers, which are all protected species, are not adversely affected by the proposals.

16. Landscaping

Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the landscape details as shown on the Tree Protection Plan (HTS-TPP-01C) in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building(s).

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

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

Informatives:

1. Pre-commencement conditions

The applicant is reminded that this approval is granted subject to conditions which must be complied with prior to the development starting on site. Commencement of the development without complying with the pre-commencement requirements may be outside the terms of this permission and liable to enforcement action. The information required should be formally submitted to the Council for consideration with the relevant fee. Once the details have been approved in writing the development should be carried out only in accordance with those details. If this is not clear please contact the case officer to discuss.

2. Demolition notice

The applicant is reminded that a Demolition Notice may be required to be served on the Council in accordance with current Building Regulations and it is recommended that the Building Control Section be contacted for further advice.

3. Fire safety

The applicant is reminded that the development will need to be designed and built in accordance with the fire safety standards of current Building Regulation requirements. Relevant information is available in the following web link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-approved-document-b>. Full assessment of the proposed development in respect of 'Building Control' matters will be undertaken during the formal statutory Building Regulations consultation.

4. **Access construction**

The Head of Highways at the Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham [0118 9746000] should be contacted for the approval of the access construction details before any work is carried out within the highway (including verges and footways). This planning permission does NOT authorise the construction of such an access or works.

5. **Positive and proactive discussion**

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 Trees and Landscape and Highway Safety.

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.

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application Number	Proposal	Decision & Date
19674	Scout camp, fence, access, car park	Approval 22/08/83
33454	Permanent portaloo	Temporary permission until 31/07/94 granted on 05/07/89
36669	Building for shelter and training, re-site toilet, relocate cess pit (33454)	Refusal 05/12/90
37156	Building for shelter and training	Refusal 26/04/91
37848	Building for scout HQs	Temporary Permission until 31/07/96 granted on 24/07/91
44481	Shed, fencing, car parking and lighting	Temporary Permission until 31/07/96 granted on 02/01/96
F/1996/63966	Renewal of permission 37848 and 44481	Approved 03/09/96

SUMMARY INFORMATION	
For Non-residential	
Site Area	1.37 Hectares
Previous land use(s) and floorspace(s)	Assembly and leisure (Scouts Meeting Hall) 118 sq.m.
Proposed floorspace of each use	Assembly and leisure 158 sq.m.
Change in floorspace (+/-)	+ 40 sq.m.
Number of jobs created/lost	N/A
Existing parking spaces	20
Proposed parking spaces	13

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Crime Prevention Design Officer	No comments received
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue	No objections subject to informative
Southern Gas Networks	No objections
Thames Water	No comments received
WBC Biodiversity	No objections subject to condition
WBC Drainage	No objections subject to condition
WBC Environmental Health	No objections
WBC Highways	No objections subject to condition
WBC Tree & Landscape	No objections subject to condition
WBC Cleaner & Greener (Waste Services)	No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

Town/Parish Council:

- **Woodley Town Council:** No objections.
- **Charvil Parish Council:** Supports the application as the proposal would enhance the site in the long run.

Local Members: No comments received

Neighbours: No comments received

APPLICANTS POINTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site is currently used for camping and scouting and the meeting hall is ancillary to this use. • The proposal would comply with exception point 1 of policy CP11 which supports proposals for recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside since camping and scouting contribute to the recreational use of the site. • Existing building has poor environmental performance. Its replacement with a new building will result in environmental improvement. • Relocating the building closer to the main entrance would result in compact development, leaving the rest of the site in natural forested condition. • The replacement meeting hall would be approximately 51% larger than the existing hall in terms of volume. The additional volume mostly comes from the proposed pitched roof. The increase in footprint is approximately 34%.

- The proposal is located within a forested site and some distance from the adjacent properties. It is relatively isolated and so is unlikely to be considered to have any detrimental impact.
- The existing cess pit drainage will be replaced with mains soil drainage. This will have a positive impact on neighbouring properties.

PLANNING POLICY		
National Policy	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
	NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance
Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010	CP1	Sustainable Development
	CP2	Inclusive Communities
	CP3	General Principles for Development
	CP6	Managing Travel Demand
	CP7	Biodiversity
	CP9	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
	CP11	Proposals outside development limits (including countryside)
Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	CC01	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	CC02	Development Limits
	CC03	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	CC04	Sustainable Design and Construction
	CC07	Parking
	CC09	Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)
	CC10	Sustainable Drainage
	TB21	Landscape Character
	TB23	Biodiversity and Development
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	BDG	Borough Design Guide – Section 4

PLANNING ISSUES

Description of Development:

1. The proposal is for the erection of new meeting hall, relocation of three metal storage containers, plus car park improvements with the installation of a cycle stand and demolition of the existing meeting hall. The new meeting hall is proposed to be located closer to the existing access gate and near the car park area and will have 158 sq.m of building footprint and 560 cu.m of volume. Three existing metal storage containers are proposed to be relocated closer to the car parking and cycle storage area.

2. It is proposed to retain the existing meeting hall during construction of the new hall to allow continued use of the site for scouting. Whilst it is considered acceptable, condition 6 is included to ensure demolition of the existing hall prior to occupation of the new hall. This is to protect the character of the area including designated countryside since retention of both buildings would result in inappropriate urbanisation and spread of development within the site.

Site Description:

3. The application site is located to the south of Charvil Village on Waingels Road within designated Countryside. The site is currently used for camping and scouting and existing buildings on the site are associated with this use. Existing development consists of a timber clad scouts meeting hall, three metal storage containers and some play equipment as well as car parking area near the main gate. The site is located within an ancient woodland as well as within a local wildlife site named Norris' Copse Bird Sanctuary and next to a waterbody. The camp site is located opposite to Waingels College and the neighbouring area has some linear residential development along Waingels Road.

Principle of Development:

4. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD) Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
5. The proposal site is located within designated Countryside outside any defined settlement boundary and Core Strategy Policy CP11 should be considered while assessing the impact of the proposal. Policy CP11 states that In order to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted except where:
 - 1) It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and
 - 2) It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and
 - 3) It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement; or
 - 4) In the case of residential extensions, does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building;
 - 5) In the case of replacement dwellings the proposal must:
 - i) Bring about environmental improvements; or

- ii) Not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.
 - 6) Essential community facilities cannot be accommodated within development limits or through the re-use/replacement of an existing building;
 - 7) Affordable housing on rural exception sites in line with CP9.
6. The proposal is considered to comply with criterion 1 of the above list since it is proposed to erect a replacement scout meeting hall which would satisfy the requirement of contributing to recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside. Whilst the new hall would be located on a different area from the existing hall, subject to removal of the existing hall before occupation of the new hall the proposal is considered not to result in expansion of development. The new hall would be located closer to the main entrance and car park to the front, thus reducing spread of development within the. The replacement building would improve the condition of the scout hall and as such would be considered to bring about environmental improvement. The scouts meeting hall is a community facility and associated camping activities would require countryside location. The proposed car parking would comply with the Borough parking standards. As such, the proposal complies with parts 1, 2, 3 and 6 of policy CP11 and is acceptable in principle.

Character of the Area:

- 7. 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. RD1, RD2, NR1 and NR2 of the BDG require that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area.
- 8. The proposal site is located within designated Countryside within ecologically sensitive area. The Borough Design Guide SPD states that within designated countryside, any replacement building not larger than 50% of the existing building would be acceptable, provided the building brings about environmental improvements. Whilst this guidance primarily relates to residential buildings, it can be considered as a guidelines for all replacement buildings within countryside.
- 9. The proposed hall would be larger than the existing hall by 34% in terms of footprint and by 51% in terms of volume. Whilst the volume increase would be more than the recommended amount, in this instance it is considered acceptable since the building would have suitable design. The proposed walls and roof would include matt green colour cladding similar to agricultural buildings that will be appropriate for the countryside location. A condition is included to ensure appropriate materials are used for the construction of the new hall (condition 7). Moreover, the building will be partially obscured from public views by existing mature vegetation along the front boundary and will not appear as an intrusive feature within the existing street scene.
- 10. The new hall would have a gabled roof with 4.9m ridge height. Whilst this would be higher than the 3m high flat roof of the existing hall, it is considered acceptable since there are other buildings of similar height or even taller within the existing street scene including Waingels College located across the road.

11. The replacement hall would be located closer to the main entrance and car park, resulting in more compact form of development reducing spread. Care has been taken in designing the car park area to retain most of the protected trees to minimise harmful impact on the landscape character. Additional planting is proposed around the car park area to soften its view from the woodland. New planting is also proposed on the site of the existing meeting hall to help the area returned to woodland.
12. The relocation of metal storage containers will not result in additional built development and would not have additional impact. Their re-siting closer to the front near the car park area would result in reduction of spread of development. Overall, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its impact on the character of the area including the countryside.

Residential Amenities:

13. The proposed replacement building and other ancillary activities including car parking area are not considered to have any detrimental impact on any neighbouring properties due to the isolated location of the proposal site away from any other property.

Access and Movement:

Highway Safety:

14. There is an existing access from Waingels Road that is proposed to be widened to 4.8m. This is considered acceptable and there is no highway safety concerns relating to the proposed development subject to condition 12 requiring any gate to be set back from the carriageway edge by 5m.

Traffic Impact:

15. The proposal is for a replacement scouts meeting hall with an increased floorspace of 40 sq.m. This increase in floorspace is not large enough to cause significant traffic impact within this area.

Parking:

16. For the proposed floorspace, the Borough Parking Standard requires 8 spaces of 2.5m x 5m dimension for the previous use class D2 (new use class F1e). The proposed car park plan shows 13 parking spaces including one disabled parking which meets the parking standards. A condition (no. 8) is included to secure appropriate level of parking within the site. Cycle parking area for 6 cycles is proposed which is acceptable. However, since no details of the cycle storage is provided, this is secured using condition 9.

Construction Method Statement:

17. Due to the proximity of the site to Waingels College, a construction method statement is required. This is secured using condition 4.

Flooding and Drainage:

18. The proposed development would be located within Flood Zone 1 with low risk of surface water flooding. However, the proposal would result in increase in impermeable area leading to increase in surface water run-off. Additionally, it is proposed to remove some of the existing vegetation which currently act as a natural flood management system and any removal of planting can have a negative impact in consideration to the surface water flooding.
19. Based on the above, whilst there is no objection to the proposed scheme from flooding and drainage aspect, since no drainage details have been provided with the application, a condition (no. 3) is included to ensure appropriate drainage of the site.

Landscape and Trees:

20. The site is located within the countryside and consists of a woodland protected by a TPO (28/1971). The site is also designated as a Local Wildlife Site. The proposal is to erect a new scouts meeting hall and demolition of the existing hall that will require removal of 8 individual TPO trees and 3 groups of 2 and 5 trees (in total 17 trees). It has been mentioned in the supporting Arboricultural Method Statement that all of the trees identified for removal belong to categories C and U and most of them have poor structural form. As such, removal of these trees would not have a negative impact on the character of the existing woodland.
21. Replacement planting is proposed both on the footprint of the existing hall to return this area into its natural setting as well as near the proposed car park to soften its appearance from the woodland. The landscape proposal includes 25 trees to be planted where the old scout hall is to be removed and is made up of the following trees: 10 English Oaks; 5 Scots Pines and 10 Small-Leaf Lime. Car parking planting includes a mix of informal under-planting to match the woodland nearby. This is considered acceptable.
22. The application is supported by an Arboricultural Method Statement that details out the trees to be removed and protection of existing trees. The WBC Trees and Landscape Officer has reviewed this document and has raised no objection subject to conditions securing protection of existing trees (no. 5) and implementation of appropriate landscape scheme (no. 16).

Ecology:

Ancient Woodland:

23. The application site is listed on Natural England's Ancient Woodland Inventory. It is therefore important to consider if the proposed development would cause deterioration or loss of the woodland habitat.
24. The proposed use is not different from the current use of the site and as such, the nature of this use would not be intensified by the slightly larger footprint of the proposed hall. Additionally, the proposed foundation design would result in a net improvement to the woodland over time. The rationalisation of the built structures to be nearer the entrance will also reduce the disturbance of the woodland soil by heavy vehicles. As

such, the proposal is considered to not have any detrimental impact and in fact is likely to be beneficial for the ecology of the ancient woodland.

Local Wildlife Site:

25. The site is also listed as part of the Local Wildlife Site, Norris's Copse Bird Sanctuary (SU77S01). It is considered that the proposed development will not result in the deterioration of the Local Wildlife Site subject to condition (no. 13) securing an external lighting strategy that is appropriate for the light sensitive species which are likely to be using the site.
26. The local authority has an interest, under the NERC Act, in promoting positive conservation management measures on Local Wildlife Sites. The Council's records indicate that Norris's Copse Bird Sanctuary has a current management plan. It will be relevant for the management plan to be reviewed and revised to take into account the changes proposed in the current scheme. It is considered reasonable to include a condition (no. 14) to secure the submission and approval of a Landscape Environmental Management Plan for the site.

Protected Species:

27. The application is supported by an ecological assessment report which details the findings of an appropriately undertaken survey and states that the proposal is unlikely to result in any harmful impact on bats. However, the report includes precautionary mitigation measures for other protected species to be undertaken during the construction process. Condition 15 is included to secure this.

Community Infrastructure Levy:

28. The proposal is for a scout hall which is a non-residential development scheduled to have a CIL rate of £0.00 per square metre.

Other:

29. There is no other objection to the proposal on Environmental Health; Archaeology; Heritage and Fire Safety grounds. Whilst no fire safety information is provided with the application, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service has not raised any objection to the proposal subject to the proposed building meeting functional requirements of current building regulations in terms of fire safety. An informative (no. 3) is included to remind the applicant of this requirement.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)

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

CONCLUSION

31. The proposal is for the erection of a new scout meeting hall, relocation of three metal storage containers, plus car park improvements with the installation of a cycle stand that would contribute and promote recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside. The proposed development would be suitably located and would be appropriate in design for the rural character subject to condition requiring removal of the existing hall prior to occupation of the new hall. The proposal would not have any unreasonable landscape, ecological or traffic impact, subject to recommended conditions. The application is therefore recommended for an approval.