

**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE  
PLANNING COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 18 MAY 2021 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.55 PM**

**Committee Members Present**

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

**Councillors Present and Speaking**

Councillors: Sarah Kerr and Maria Gee

**Officers Present**

Connor Corrigan, Service Manager - Planning and Delivery  
Mark Cupit, Assistant Director Delivery & Infrastructure : Place and Growth  
Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager  
Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor  
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

**Case Officers Present**

Emy Circuit  
Andrew Fletcher

**72. APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was submitted from Gary Cowan.

**73. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Pauline Jorgensen declared a prejudicial interest in agenda items 76 and 77, on the grounds that although she had no involvement in these applications in her role as the Executive Member for Highways and Transport she had spoken to both supporters and objectors of these applications, and had been advised not to take part in the discussions or votes for these items.

Angus Ross stated that three of the supplementary planning documents had been signed by him in 2010 and 2011, whilst he was an Executive Member. Angus added that despite this he had no involvement with these applications since and would therefore take part in all of the discussions and votes.

**74. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS**

No applications were recommended for deferral, or withdrawn.

**75. DIVERSION OF FOOT PATHS IN SUPPORT OF APPLICATION NO. 192928**

**Proposal:** Diversion of parts of Wokingham Footpath 24 / Wokingham Without Footpath 9 and Wokingham Without Footpath 5, and the stopping up of part of Wokingham Footpath 25, Wokingham Footpath 10 and Wokingham Without Footpath 5 in support of the planning application for the construction of the South Wokingham Distributor Road (SWDR) and the Eastern Gateway between Finchampstead Road and Waterloo Road.

**Applicant:** Mrs Jean Mulovi, Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this item, set out in agenda pages 5 to 20.

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

Maria Gee, Ward Member, spoke in objection to this item. Maria was of the opinion that there were many good qualities about the proposed new footpath routes in the new proposed developments, including improved surfaces and improved access for disabled residents. Maria raised concerns that the footpaths were not suitable for shared use, and felt it was unclear what would be done to deter cyclists from using the existing footpaths without also deterring wheelchair users. Maria queried whether the Committee was convinced that the new designs would appropriately direct each type of path user. Prior to making changes to the existing network, Maria asked that the Committee look at the gaps between the boards of the boardwalk to see whether they had been considered in relation to the most commonly used wheels for pushchairs and wheelchairs. Maria sought confirmation that the boardwalk surface would not become slippery in winter. Maria was of the opinion that the design of the SWDR could potentially place obstacles in the way of increased pedestrian use due to a lack of controlled crossing points. Maria asked the Committee to consider whether the new designs were the best that they could be prior to removing or diverting the existing pathway network, and asked the Committee to confirm whether these plans had met Wokingham Borough Council's duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Simon Weeks queried whether any of the signage related to the usage of the footpaths would be changing. Andrew Fletcher, case officer, confirmed that officers were not looking to prevent use of the paths by cyclists, and cyclists would be entitled to use the paths under permitted use.

Simon Weeks queried whether the boardwalk would meet current standards related to pushchairs and cyclists. Andrew Fletcher confirmed that the boardwalk would meet the current standards, and officers were happy with the designs.

Angus Ross stated that much work had been done to ensure the continuity of the public rights of way system in the area, whilst taking into account the needs of future housing developments and major roads. Angus added that many of the public footpaths were currently well used, and the modifications suggested would maintain safety and usability. Angus stated that footpath 5 was currently seldom used due to the relatively unsafe entry and exit, however the proposals would improve upon this and should make it a much more useful walking route.

Stephen Conway stated that Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) promoted clear separation between pedestrians and cyclists, and raised concerns that should these footpaths not be separated then some users may be deterred from using the routes and instead rely on cars for transport. Andrew Fletcher stated that Section 8.2.8 of the LTN specifically discouraged separation of routes which were 3m wide or less. In those instances, as was the case for these footpaths, a fully shared surface was best as otherwise each side would only have 1.5m which could cause additional issues.

Stephen Conway queried what measures would be put in place to reduce slippage on the boardwalk. Andrew Fletcher clarified that the boardwalk would be made of timber decking with grooved boards with anti-slip slats. Gaps between boards would be a maximum of 12mm wide, which exceeded standards.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether any of the proposed diversions could make the routes more prone to flooding, and whether any of the amended routes could cause issues for some users due to increased length. Andrew Fletcher stated the proposals would make the footpaths more usable for most of the year compared to their current routes, and the footpaths would only become unusable during very severe weather conditions. Currently footpaths 9 and 24 were flooded during severe floods, and the proposals included an alternative path off of the highway which should alleviate issues during severe floods. Relating to the distance, Andrew stated that any increase to distances would not cause an issue for any user.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey was of the opinion that a fully segregated route for cyclists and pedestrians would be more suitable for the proposed diverted footpaths. Andrew Fletcher stated that bridleways had allowed cycle use since 1969, and many bridleways were narrower than 3m and generally had very few issues.

Abdul Loyes queried whether there were any standards stating how wide a public right of way needed to be. Andrew Fletcher stated that he could not answer related to an adopted highways standard, however from a public right of way perspective there were no minimum width standards.

Chris Bowring commented that officers had given assurances that the proposed routes were acceptable as shared use footpaths, given the width of the pathways. Chris added that these routes were required for the South Wokingham Distribution Road, which was to be considered by the Committee later in the agenda.

Carl Doran queried why the boardwalk was chosen to be 4m wide. Andrew Fletcher commented that he had received the application and checked that the boardwalk was acceptable, which it was in this instance.

**RESOLVED** That the orders be made, subject to the recommendations as set out on agenda page 6.

#### **75.1 Combined Minutes from Applications 203535; 192928; 190900; 190914 and 191068**

***Due to the linked nature of applications 203535, 192928, 190900, 190914, and 191068, the presentation, public speaking, and discussions for these items were taken as one. Each item was voted on separately.***

***Pauline Jorgensen declared a prejudicial interest in applications 203535 and 192828, and took no part in the discussions or votes on these items.***

Peter Dennis, Wokingham Town Council, spoke in objection to application number 192928. Peter stated that this application would blur the boundary between Bracknell and Wokingham. Peter added that Wokingham Town Council had been consulted on this application since September 2019, and they wanted to see a fully segregated cycle lane. Peter stated that if Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) was seen to be taking the Climate Emergency seriously then they needed to invest in proper cycling infrastructure which would encourage children to cycle and walk to and from school. Peter added that officers had stated that there would not be space to segregate a cycle lane, however in his opinion there was room for this and in any case the cycle route needn't necessarily follow the main road. Peter queried why a Dutch style roundabout had not been considered, which would

have aided cyclists. Peter stated that cycling uptake was on the increase, and WBC should be looking to make it easier for the community to adopt sustainable travel methods. Peter asked that the Committee send the plans back for further review, to ensure that the designs fully promoted sustainable travel in an efficient and safe way.

Adrian Mather, Wokingham Town Council, spoke in objection to application number 203535. Adrian stated that the Town Council had met to discuss this application and had resolved to recommend a refusal, as they felt that it was unsafe. Adrian was of the opinion that the plans did not comply with CP1, CP2 or CP3 of the core strategy, and removal of crossing points went against both WBC and NHS guidelines. Adrian felt that removal of crossing points could lead to more accidents, especially when considering that there would be significantly more traffic passing through this area as a result of the applications being considered on the evening. Adrian stated that this application would fail to address the issues caused by the two Victorian era railway bridges, which did not comply with modern standards including for safe vehicle clearance heights. Adrian added that it was a terrifying experience to cycle under one of the bridges whilst a Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) passed through in the other direction. Adrian asked the Committee to consider whether the removal of pedestrian crossing points and the nature of the existing bridges would address what the town really needed in terms of safety and accessibility amongst other issues.

Andy Bowker, resident, spoke in objection to application number 203535. Andy commented that Members were elected to represent their residents and not WBC officers. Andy was of the opinion that a better option rather than the proposed scheme would have been to construct a large new roundabout and new bridge on the Eden Motors site. Andy added that this proposal had been considered and subsequently dismissed by officers, and a freedom of information request had shown that the replacement bridge had not been fully investigated and should still be considered as a better alternative to the proposed scheme. Andy stated that in April 2019 officers moved to a revised design which sought to maintain the pedestrian crossing on the south side of Finchampstead Road as well as adequate approach sightlines, which were both requirements of the safety audit. Andy added that this approach was the preferred option for over 18 months, however one month prior to submitting the plans officers had withdrew the need for both of these requirements. Andy was of the opinion that this would cause additional safety issues, and was done to avoid paying compensation to the landowners to purchase the land for this preferred option. Andy stated that the departure from standard did not relate to the pedestrian crossing, but instead directly related to the approach sightlines which will not be in place. Andy asked that the Committee refuse this application as it would, in his opinion, compromise on safety and not fulfil its purpose.

Adrian Betteridge, WATCH Wokingham, spoke in objection to application number 203535. Adrian stated that on average in the UK 11 cyclists were killed or seriously injured each week, and 1 in 4 of these involved a roundabout where the cyclists were stuck by a faster moving vehicle. Adrian added that National Planning Policy Framework required applications for development to give first priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and was of the opinion that the proposals took a reasonably safe junction and replaced it with one designed to maximise the flow of vehicles at the expense of vulnerable road users. Adrian stated that the application claimed to meet standards, despite there being no provision for safe cycling on two of the three sides of the roundabout, and the removal of the existing pedestrian crossing which was to be replaced by either an uncontrolled crossing, a long diversion, or a possible alternative crossing further down the road. Adrian added that these changes had been made since the previous public consultation in the knowledge that children use this roundabout to walk and cycle to and from at least four

different schools. Adrian was of the opinion that the proposals failed to meet the Government's minimum guidelines, would not be considered reasonably adequate by any model measure, and in one case to go against the advice of an independent safety adviser. Adrian stated that the Government expected half of all local journeys to be walked or cycled by 2030, for the sake of the climate, air quality, and local congestion, and was of the opinion that this scheme would have the opposite effect. Adrian stated that in future, Active Travel England would not allow schemes such as this to be implemented. Adrian urged the Committee to make any approval conditional on the scheme being adapted for the benefit of pedestrians and cyclists.

Paul Evans, resident, spoke in objection to application number 203535. Paul stated that residents from 96 Finchampstead Road wished to object to the proposed scheme as they had not been consulted in the design. Paul stated that the current proposals would create an additional hazard when entering and exiting their driveways, due to the pavement for the central reservation and signage located outside of their driveway. Paul added that the driveways for 94, 94a, and 96 Finchampstead Road did not appear on any of the plans. Paul asked that a keep clear section of road be added to help alleviate issues for these properties when entering and exiting their driveways. Paul stated that no noise considerations had been given to houses on the eastern side of the road, which would be effected by additional traffic passing through the roundabout. Paul requested additional noise reduction measures to help mitigate these issues.

Alex Crann, resident, spoke in objection to application number 192928. Alex stated that the southern distributor road was a once in a lifetime opportunity to provide a road which prioritised safe and sustainable travel. Alex stated that the current designs included a shared use footway which was not suitable for both pedestrians and cyclists, which would lead to conflict and reduced journeys via sustainable travel methods. Alex was of the opinion that the current proposals would not promote sustainable travel, and once implemented would be very difficult to change and amend. Alex felt that the road had potential for excellent town centre access, however it needed to be done in the right way first time around.

Fitzroy Morrissey, resident, spoke in objection to application number 192928. Fitzroy raised concerns related to the flood risk associated with the southern distributor road development. Fitzroy added that he lived approximately 30 yards from Luckley brook, upstream of the proposed development, and in January and February of this year his property had suffered severe groundwater flooding which the Environment Agency believed was connected to the very high levels of the Luckley Brook at the time. Fitzroy commented that there was also serious flooding in the wood behind Luckley Brook, and considerable water build up underneath the bridge at the end of Luckley Brook and on the road towards Ludrove School Drive, where many residents came to walk. Fitzroy stated that these recent issues had been reported to both the Environment Agency and WBC's flooding team, but had not been taken into account in the assessment report for this development. Fitzroy requested clarification as to what measures would be put in place to ensure the development and proposed diversion and culverting of Luckley Brook would not create the risk of more regular and more serious flooding in the future, and asked the Committee to commit to monitor this risk both before and after the development process.

Jean Mulovi, on behalf of WBC, spoke in support of applications 203535 and 192928. Jean stated that both schemes had been developed with extensive public consultation and public exhibitions, and the team had worked closely with the team in charge of designing the South Wokingham Strategic Development Location (SW SDL) to achieve a

coordinated planning process. Relating to application 192928 Jean added that, wherever possible, utility provision including pedestrian and cycling infrastructure was made a priority. Jean stated that LTN 1/20 had been addressed in light of the new guidance and officers felt that the proposals conformed to the Gear Change requirements. Jean stated that there was no room for segregated pedestrian and cycle lanes, in part due to the existing highway boundary. Jean stated that the new road would provide 2.7km of new highway with shared pedestrian and cycle access. Designs included a footbridge over the Emmbrook, and as part of the overall scheme located in a flood plain the designs would better alleviate flooding concerns towards the existing Tesco's roundabout. Jean stated that the scheme was subject to an environmental impact assessment which had shown improved air quality, biodiversity, and increased levels of active travel as a result of proposals in the future. Jean stated that the scheme had been revised in order to meet the needs of users as much as possible. Relating to application number 203535 Jean stated that the proposals intended to replace the existing mini-roundabout which was a key constraint of getting into and out of Wokingham. Jean stated that there would be further changes made to the existing uncontrolled crossing point, which would be replaced by a controlled crossing point to be secured under condition 3 relating to application number 203535. Jean stated that a number of trees would be required to be felled as a part of this scheme, however due to insufficient space on site to replace all of the trees, mitigation replanting would take place as part of the SW Distribution Road, as agreed with the WBC Landscape and Ecology officers, and secured by condition.

Roger Tustain, on behalf of the applicant, spoke in support of applications 190900, 191914 and 191068. Roger stated that these applications, in conjunction with the Western Gateway and SWDR comprised the majority elements of WBCs core strategy allocation in accordance with policy CP21, which allocated approximately 2,500 dwellings to the land to the South of Wokingham. Roger added that the first phase of this accommodated 636 dwellings to the north of the railway line, now known as Montague Park, which was now substantially complete. Roger summarised that the proposals in front of the Committee comprised up to 1,649 new dwellings, which thirty five percent of which would be affordable, a new local centre providing new local shops and land for a community facility, a new two-form entry primary school, two SANGs, a network on on-site open space including allotments and play areas, on site drainage facilities, on and off-site cycling pedestrian strategy and a comprehensive public transport strategy. Roger stated that the residential aspects of the proposals were at outline stage, which demonstrated how the development could come forward consistent with design policy. If approved, a subsequent reserved matters application and discharge of conditions would need to be undertaken, ensuring a coherent approach to every phase of development. Roger stated that all properties would conform to national space standards, and WBC adopted parking standards. Roger added that the site had a number of constraints, however the WBC SWDR team and the consortium's team have worked with the WBC planning team and statutory consultees to evolve a fully integrated and robust set of proposals.

Craig Rawlinson, on behalf of the applicant, spoke in support of application numbers 190900, 191914 and 191068. Craig stated that there had been significant collaboration with the team delivering the SWDR to ensure consistency. Craig considered the site to be a good site in transportation terms for a residential development. Craig stated that the site would provide community facilities, including a local centre and primary schools. Provision of these facilities would minimise the need for travel off-site. Craig added that the site was within walking distance to the town centre, and a range of walking and cycling improvements and corridors would be secured via condition. Craig stated that a new bus service would run through the site, between Bracknell and Wokingham train stations at a

30 minute frequency. In addition, the scheme would provide improved bus stops both on and off-site, whilst the new SWDR would mitigate the traffic impacts associated with the development. Testing works had been carried out in conjunction with WBC highways officers, which had confirmed that some junctions in the town would need to be improved, and improvement schemes had been identified. Electric charging facilities and a car club would be located on-site, and funding would be available to link the site in with the WBC My Journey programme.

Chris Patmore, on behalf of the applicant, spoke in support of application numbers 190900, 191914 and 191068. Chris stated that close collaboration had been carried out between WBC drainage, highways, landscape and ecology master planning and engineering schemes to ensure that all of the schemes complemented each other in terms of flooding and drainage. Chris stated that there were a number of water courses across the wider site. The tributary of the Emmbrook would be improved and diverted alongside the proposed SWDR, to work to reduce flooding and produce a more useful and linked green corridor. The Emmbrook itself would not be impacted by the proposed SW SDL developments, and the Thames Water sewers would still be required to discharge into the Emmbrook, however a replacement attenuation scheme would be located in the SANG area would be provided as part of a wider landscaping and ecological scheme. Chris stated that extensive flood modelling had been undertaken and agreed between the Environment Agency and WBC, which adopted best practice and would reduce the overall discharge to the Emmbrook downstream of the combined development.

Maria Gee, Ward Member, spoke in objection to application numbers 192928 and 190900. In relation to application number 192928 Maria stated that WBC had a duty to ensure safe movement of pedestrians included those who were less able. Maria commented that an average walking speed was between 3mph to 4mph, whilst an experienced cyclist could achieve speeds of 20mph. Maria added that if a group of pedestrians used the whole width of the path, this would create additional conflict and potential for accidents to occur. Maria stated that pedestrians and cyclists were being given much less space than motorists, which was not the right message to send to residents when WBC had declared a climate emergency which supported increased usage of sustainable methods of travel. Relating to application number 190900 Maria stated that SANGs should be attractive and accessible, however the proposed SANG was not located near the proposed development and was bordered by both a main road and the railway line. Maria drew comparisons with Dinton Pastures, where the areas adjoining the main road were the least visited. Maria felt that users of the proposed SANG would avoid the areas near the main road and railway line, and would not benefit from adjoining open space as users did at Dinton Pastures. Maria stated that residents of Montague Park could only access the SANG via Buckhurst Meadows, whilst the parking for the proposed new SANG was also located off of Buckhurst Meadows and was already often full at weekends and sometimes during the day. Maria felt that this land should not be converted into a SANG as it was in the wrong place both for enjoyment and use, and she urged the Committee to refuse the proposal.

Sarah Kerr, Ward Member, spoke in objection to application number 203535. Sarah stated that the proposals went against WBC core strategy, as improvements to the width of footway provision underneath the railway bridge was substandard and only located on the eastern side of the road were not included as part of this application. Sarah added that, according to Network Rail, WBC highways team had only two meetings with them, one of which being an initial "kick-off" meeting in March 2019. Sarah commented that all Committee Members were elected to represent the residents of the Borough, and all Committee Members had voted to declare a climate emergency at a previous Council

meeting. Sarah was of the opinion that the proposals would achieve a bigger roundabout leading to high speeds of vehicles, with no additional pedestrian or cycling infrastructure, thus making this junction more dangerous. Sarah did not agree that the proposals would achieve improvements towards increased active travel. Sarah was of the opinion that if the junction was genuinely about alleviating traffic issues, then the junction must be designed to make active travel measures safer and more appealing to reduce the numbers of vehicles on the road network in the first place. Sarah stated that the addition of the new pedestrian crossing on the northern arm would satisfy the current desire lines, however the southern controlled crossing was not included within the current list of conditions. Sarah commented that the omission of the uncontrolled crossing from the southern arm of the roundabout would still leave a splitter island, leaving people to try to cross here with severe sight line issues which Sarah felt had not been addressed. Sarah stated that a shared driveway between number 96 and 100 Finchampstead Road did not appear on the plans, and she did not know how they were going to be able to turn northbound out of their driveway with a splitter island in place. Sarah commented that the site was only located 600m south of an air quality management area, and was of the opinion that the proposals would shift a known problem and result in increased traffic, reducing air quality in an area heavily used by school children. Sarah urged the Committee to refuse this application, and for it to be replaced by designs which addressed the issues related with the bridge and offered people a choice of how they could travel.

Simon Weeks commented that the combined applications form part of the 2010 Core Strategy, which comprised a number of SDLs. Due to a number of reasons, the applications being considered on the evening had been significantly delayed compared to the other SDL sites, however they still formed a crucial part of the 2010 Core Strategy.

Simon Weeks queried why the improvements to the railway bridges were included in the Core Strategy but not within the applications in front of the Committee, queried issues relating to sight lines and speed of vehicles using the proposed western gateway roundabout and sought reassurances relating to vehicle flow speed so as not to dissuade pedestrians and cyclists, and queried whether we should be applying future standards to current applications. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that the proposals in front of the Committee would not prejudice any future works being carried out to the railway bridges. Judy added that the bridges saw between 10 and 20 HGVs pass under them during the peak hour. Judy stated that the western gateway was a traffic mitigation scheme to help alleviate the traffic caused by the SWDR and the proposed 1800 houses. The current mini roundabout would be over capacity regardless of whether the housing proposals went ahead. The junction had been modelled with the approved Tesco junction to the north and would bring with it considerable benefits in terms of the free flow of traffic in the future. Although primarily a highways capacity scheme, the design team had taken the opportunity to create and extend cycle routes in the area and provide additional toucan crossings as far as they could, given constraints in tying into the existing network. Judy felt that the scheme did a good job at addressing capacity issues at the junction whilst providing improvements to cycling and pedestrian access. Relating to applying future standards to current applications, an Executive decision had been made to apply LTN 1/20 to new schemes coming forward, and to embrace the principles of LTN 1/20 to schemes already in the design process such as the scheme's being considered this evening. Judy added that the schemes complied with most of the guidance issued in LTN 1/20 including the adopted guidance and policy of WBC.

Angus Ross stated that condition 6 of the SWDR application left ongoing concerns relating to the railway crossing at Star Lane, especially for pedestrians and cyclists. Angus



stressed the essential need to address this issue, as it was seen as a serious safety concern. Angus supported the general principle of the SWDR as it would hopefully reduce traffic on the Nine Mile Ride. A number of local residents had raised concerns relating to the stopping up of the Easthampstead Road, and Angus sought assurances that this was essential. Relating to the proposed SANG, Angus felt that although its proximity to the railway line was not ideal, it was closer and more accessible than the Thames Basin Heath and was approved by Natural England. Relating to the main proposed housing development, Angus queried whether the primary school would be subject to a separate planning application in time, should the application be approved on the evening. Angus queried whether there would be suitable electricity provision should all residents in the proposed dwellings charge electric vehicles at the same time. Angus raised concerns that monies were suggested to be allocated to sites in Barkham and Finchampstead rather than to sites directly affected by the proposals, and Angus queried whether it had been proven there were no more local schemes such as on Nine Mile Ride that could be addressed with these monies. Relating to the proposed smaller housing development, Angus sought assurances that the biodiversity net gain be achieved on site rather than via off site contributions. Finally, Angus sought assurances that any road with a bus route through it was wide enough to safely accommodate a bus.

Officers responded to a number of the above points. Relating to the Star Lane crossing point, Judy Kelly stated that there was an indicative scheme from the developer which showed a new minimum 3m wide shared pedestrian cycle routes on both sides of the Easthampstead Road, and detailed design would need to come forward in future. North of the railway, a S106 contribution would be required towards the Council to make any improvements, taking into account the constraints of the site. Relating to the Heathlands Road/Nine Mile Ride junction improvement, Judy confirmed that MOVA software with new ducting and space for maintenance would be provided. Over 20 junctions were looked at in the area, and the 8 chosen were the ones that the proposed developments would have an impact on. Relating to electric vehicle charging, load balancing technology was available to help balance peak loads across the network. Relating to the bus route query, Judy stated that the roads in question were a minimum of 7.3m wide, whereas the minimum standard was 6.5m. The stopping up of Easthampstead Road was due to the functioning of the SWDR junction with Easthampstead Road, in close proximity with the railway level crossing junction. As such the additional trains and traffic had been modelled in detail and to keep this section of road open would have required large master planning and amendments to the overall scheme, and instead an alternative arrangement of the Heathlands link road from the SWDR had been deemed to be a suitable alternative option. Emy Circuit, case officer, confirmed that the primary school would be granted outline planning consent should the SDL applications be approved on the evening, however approval of reserved matters would need to return in the future.

Chris Bowring queried whether 30mph would be the natural speed of SWDR, queried whether any indication could be placed on the proposed road to warn drivers that cyclists may also choose to use the road, queried whether the safety of the level crossing was a planning consideration, and queried whether road safety audits had been completed for both the roundabouts and the railway bridges. Judy Kelly stated that the road had been designed to a 30mph speed limit, and the road safety audit would address whether there were any issues of risk that vehicles may do in excess of that speed limit. Judy added that the nature of the design, including the central crossing islands and curving geometry would be features that would keep the speed limit to 30mph as was seen in north Wokingham SDL sites. Regarding the road safety audit, these were required for any change to a highway which would include both highway schemes. There was currently a preliminary

stage 1 audit, with three further stages between now and after the road had opened should permission be granted. Judy stated that there was not the available width to put a lane marking for cyclists on the highway, in part due to the areas with the central island crossing points being slightly narrower.

Carl Doran commented that although the SWDR and wider SW SDL had been within the planning process for a long time, it was unusual to see very late changes such as the addition of a signalised crossing for application number 203535. Carl was of the opinion that overall highway capacity improvements could not be achieved without changes to the Victorian bridges. Carl was of the opinion that having a shared pedestrian and cycle space was not what was best option for this scheme, and queried why the decision to only allow 3m for pedestrians and cyclists was made at the design stage. Relating to the proposed SANG, Carl stated that he had no objections to the change of use, but was not sure whether many local residents would be able to walk to the SANG from the residential properties. Relating to the proposed housing, Carl was pleased to see 35 percent provision of affordable housing, and was pleased to see there would be the recommended split of 70 percent affordable rent and 30 percent shared ownership properties. Carl was disappointed to see that the CCG had not commented on the application, despite the possibility of a new GP surgery being able to be accommodated on site, however Carl accepted that this was not a material planning consideration. Judy Kelly confirmed that application number 203535 would increase vehicle flow at the junction, which would bring the capacity below the 85 percent threshold of concern. Judy added that the issue relating to the Victorian bridge was a height issue rather than a width issue. Relating to the proposed shared pedestrian and cycle way, Judy stated that a 3m width worked well at the Montague Park development, including facilitating children walking and cycling to and from the Floreat Montague Park School. Judy added that having a small 50cm green buffer on the edge of the shared footway and cycleway allowed a long term option should small sections of the route cause concern in the future.

Stephen Conway stated that he had four concerns related to the proposed housing development. There were several prominent listed buildings that would not be in the same setting for future generations and Stephen was not confident that screening proposals would maintain their current settings, the border between Wokingham and Bracknell would now be less than 1km apart, the separation distances between existing buildings and proposed developments were policy compliant however the existing residents would still be subject to large and fundamental changes, and Stephen raised concerns that the 4 storey element of the residential design would be out of keeping with other Wokingham developments. Relating to the proposed SANG, Stephen was of the opinion that although the proposed location was not ideal there was no other alternative location. Relating the proposed new roundabout, Stephen was of the opinion that the desire would be to continue to cross the road at the current uncontrolled crossing point despite the addition of the new southern toucan crossing, which would cause additional safety risks for pedestrians and cyclists. Stephen added that LTN 1/20 was there to encourage pedestrians and cyclists to feel safe and confident, and this could be achieved in the SWDR via the creation of a wider segregated space which would remove the conflict potential between these users.

Officers responded to a number of the above points. Emy Circuit stated that a heritage assessment had taken place which showed that listed buildings would see some impact to their setting, however Historic England and WBC conservation officers had agreed that the proposals, including screening measures, were acceptable. Relating to issues of separation distances, officers had agreed to revisions regarding this which had been

deemed acceptable. In addition, reference was made to an assessment within the report and said the separation distances were comparable or greater than in other locations along the boundary and to the north. Relating to the 4 storey elements of the proposals, Emy stated that the majority of dwellings would be two or two and a half storeys rising to three in some areas, with 4 storey element being limited to the central neighbourhood area as a focal point. Emy stated that Natural England's advice for SANGs was that it was expected for most people to walk to a SANG which was located within 400m of their property, and much of the SDL would be located within this distance. Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Planning and Delivery, stated that LTN 1/20 was not a major concern as it was guidance which had been predominantly followed for the Highways applications. The initial road safety audit had passed on all sections of the proposed road and roundabout modifications, which suggested no safety implications. Connor added that without the key highways elements, the residential units would not be able to go forward, leading to speculative and inappropriate planning applications from developers due to WBC not meeting its housing numbers. These applications would most likely be allowed at appeal, as an Inspector would conclude that WBC had not met its quota of approved houses. Connor stated that the Committee needed to balance the need for an extra two metres each side of the proposed SWDR against the cost of potential appeals and inappropriate developments being allowed across the Borough.

Pauline Jorgensen queried why a secondary school was not being provided on the proposed development site, and whether there would be trees on the small strip on land between the railway line and the proposed development to help lessen the impact of the noise from the railway. Emy Circuit stated that there had been no indication from the WBC education team that a new secondary school would be required on this site, and it was up to that team to come up with a strategy to address the peak in new secondary school aged children in future. Secondary education was covered by CIL contributions, and there was no policy requirement for a secondary school within the SDL site. Relating to the strip of land, Emy stated that additional landscaping details would be required, however she would expect to see some planting in that area to help mitigate noise from the railway.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey was of the opinion that it should be relatively simple to widen the pathway adjacent to the proposed SWDR to 4m, and added that she did not believe that the scheme would be altered or amended once built if there were issues. Rachelle asked that all proposed dwellings would be fitted with sustainable energy such as heat pumps or electricity rather than gas. Rachelle commented that the Montague Park community centre took a considerable amount of time to get fitted out, and worried that the proposed community building space may not be completed in good time. Rachelle asked that roof voids be avoided on the apartment buildings to reduce the risks of fire. Simon Weeks commented that building regulations would govern the issues relating to energy provision and roof voids rather than planning policy. Relating to the potential widening of the footpath, Judy Kelly stated that the SWDR application had been assessed in relation to the cycling level of service assessment, which was appended to LTN 1/20, and therefore the scheme would be eligible for funding under LTN 1/20 if it was put forward as such. Judy added that the 0.5m buffer on either side was required to ensure that people did not fall onto the carriageway or scrape handlebars against a wall. Relating to an earlier point raised about number 96 Finchampstead Road, this wasn't raised as an issue at the first safety audit stage, but it would be picked up at the second stage and the island could be modified slightly if required. Connor Corrigan stated that reducing the verge buffer would reduce the overall quality of the environment for cyclists and pedestrians. Connor added that LTN 1/20 had a large focus on very high usage areas such as urban cities and railway hubs.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether any modelling had been done to forecast pedestrian and cyclist traffic on the pavement of the proposed SWDR, queried how wide were the verges on the majority of the proposed SWDR and how wide they were required to be for reasons of safety and tree planting, queried what extent Network Rail influenced what was and was not possible regarding modifications to the rail bridges, queried what target of biodiversity net gain was applied to the proposed SWDR, and queried exactly how numbers 92 and 94 Finchampstead would enter and exit onto the road safely. Judy Kelly stated that modelling for pedestrian and cyclist use was very difficult, however school travel data was available from Floreat Montague Park School which indicated around 230 pupils using the paths in some way to get to school. Judy stated that a non-segregated route of 3m was deemed acceptable, and was also deemed acceptable in LTN 1/20 for routes of up to 300 pedestrians and up to 300 cyclists in the peak hour. Relating to the verges, these would have trees and street lighting which needed to be set away from the carriageways and away from the buffer zone for cyclists. Judy stated that there would be additional cycle routes through the future residential developments and through the proposed SANG, which would allow pedestrians and cyclists to disperse naturally. Network Rail would need to be involved in the design and approval of modifications to the railway bridge, as well as in discussions regarding the practicalities of construction and line closures. Relating to the property access query, Judy stated that should the splitter island cause any access issues, this could be addressed by shifting the island slightly. Emy Circuit stated that the biodiversity net gain would be 10 percent for both the residential parcels and the SWDR, if approved. There was also a mechanism to achieve these gains off-site if it was not possible to achieve the full 10 percent gain along the SWDR route.

Chris Bowring proposed an extension to the meeting of 30 minutes. This proposal was seconded by Simon Weeks and unanimously agreed by the Committee.

Abdul Loyes queried whether a condition could be added requiring provision of a GP surgery on site, and sought clarification as to the costs that WBC could incur should these applications be deferred or refused. Simon Weeks clarified that provision of GP surgeries was a matter for the CCG to decide, and their current model did not promote smaller GP surgeries fulfilling relatively local needs. Connor Corrigan stated that it would cost millions of pounds to redesign the highways and residential schemes, which could take several years. Connor added that the overall package provided a community facility, new schools and new highways. Connor stated that if the housing specifically was delayed, the planning inspectorate would likely be minded to approve speculative and inappropriate developments in order to fulfil the Borough's quota of housing delivery.

Stephen Conway queried how the whole scheme could be jeopardised by allowing for an additional 0.5m either side of the pathways. Connor Corrigan stated that 2m would be required either side, which would result in having to shift drainage, street furniture, and rearrange where residential units could be situated amongst other issues.

Chris Bowring commented that the only way to change application would be to refuse it, and in his opinion no evidence had been provided to show that there would be safety issues for pedestrians or cyclists for either of the highways scheme.

Relating to application number 192928, Stephen Conway proposed that this item be deferred to allow officers to explore the ways to enable segregation of pedestrians and cyclists. This was seconded by Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey and upon being put to the vote the motion fell.

Relating to application number 203535, the Committee resolved to amend condition 3 (relating to improved sight lines at the uncontrolled pedestrian crossing that currently exists) via delegation to the Chairman, and to add additional condition 13 (relating to provision of a toucan crossing on Finchampstead Road, towards the south side of the proposed roundabout) via delegation to the Chairman.

***The resolutions for each individual item can be found in their specific minute.***

**76. APPLICATION NO. 203535 - LAND AT THE JUNCTION OF FINCHAMPSTEAD ROAD AND MOLLY MILLARS LANE**

***The substantive minutes for this item are contained in minute item 75.1.***

**Proposal:** Full planning application for works at the junction of the A321 Finchampstead Road and Molly Millars Lane comprising replacement of the existing three-arm mini-roundabout with a larger roundabout; demolition of Nos 81 and 83/85 Finchampstead Road; and associated landscaping and changes to the pedestrian crossing environment.

**Applicant:** Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 21 to 54.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Amendment to paragraph 11, to state that the building due to be demolished were number 81, 83, 84 and 85 Finchampstead Road;
- Amendment to paragraph 22, to state that transport modelling had assessed junction performance in 2036 as well as 2026;
- Clarification that reference to "Appendix B, Highway (General Arrangement Plan)" was located on page 52;
- Additional clause to condition 3, relating to removal of uncontrolled crossing and additional signalised crossing at Finchampstead Road South;
- Additional condition 12 (hours of work).

**RESOLVED** That application number 203535 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 22 to 27, additional condition 12 as set out in the Members' Update, amended condition 3 (relating to improved sight lines at the uncontrolled pedestrian crossing that currently exists) via delegation to the Chairman, and additional condition 13 (relating to provision of a toucan crossing on Finchampstead Road, towards the south side of the proposed roundabout) via delegation to the Chairman.

**77. APPLICATION NO. 192928 - LAND SOUTH OF WOKINGHAM, EAST OF FINCHAMPSTEAD ROAD AND WEST OF WATERLOO ROAD, WOKINGHAM.**

***The substantive minutes for this item are contained in minute item 75.1.***

**Proposal:** A full planning application for the construction of the South Wokingham Distributor Road (SWDR) between Finchampstead Road and Waterloo Road, including a link to Heathlands Road, together with associated works including demolition of Nos 76A and 76B Finchampstead Road. The SWDR will comprise a single carriageway, approximately 2.7km length and will also include a shared 3m wide cycle lane/foot way.

**Applicant:** Mrs Jean Mulovi, Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 55 to 138.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Clarification that the expiry date was 31 May 2021;
- Clarification that comments received from Wokingham Without Parish Council on page 131 were received on 3 March 2019 and revised on 17 August 2020;
- Correction to paragraph 92 to replace the word westbound with the word eastbound;
- Reference to additional drawings received;
- Additional consultation response received from Wokingham Town Council.

**RESOLVED** That application number 192928 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 57 to 77.

**78. APPLICATION NO. 190900 - LAND TO THE SOUTH OF ANNE'S MANOR**  
*The substantive minutes for this item are contained in minute item 75.1.*

**Proposal:** Full planning application for the proposed change of use of land from nil use to D2 for proposed Suitable Alternative Greenspace (SANG) with associated landscaping. To be read in conjunction with applications 190914 & 191068.

**Applicant:** Kingacre Estates Ltd

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 139 to 178.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Clarification that the expiry date was 28 May 2021;
- Clarification that the comments contained on pages 172 to 176 were Wokingham Without Parish Council's initial comments submitted on 5 September 2019, and their revised comments contained on pages 177 and 178 were received on 28 September 2020.

**RESOLVED** That application number 190900 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 140 to 149.

**79. APPLICATION NO. 190914 - LAND AT PHASE 2A OF THE SOUTH WOKINGHAM STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT LOCATION (SDL)**  
*The substantive minutes for this item are contained in minute item 75.1.*

**Proposal:** Outline application with all matters reserved except for principal means of access to the highways, for up to 215 dwellings, public open space, play areas, associated infrastructure and landscaping. To be read in conjunction with applications 190900 & 191068.

**Applicant:** Kingacre Estates Ltd

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 179 to 276.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Clarification that the expiry date was 28 May 2021;
- Clarification that the comments contained on agenda pages 267 to 271 were Wokingham Without Parish Council's initial comments submitted on 5 September 2019, and their revised comments contained on pages 272 to 273 were received on 28 September 2020;
- Clarification of condition 53.

**RESOLVED** That application number 190914 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 181 to 209, and amended condition 53 as set out in the Members' Update.

**80. APPLICATION NO. 191068 - LAND AT PHASE 2B OF THE SOUTH WOKINGHAM STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT LOCATION (SDL)**  
*The substantive minutes for this item are contained in minute item 75.1.*

**Proposal:** Hybrid planning application (part outline/part detailed) comprising an outline application with all matters reserved except principal means of access to the highways, for a mixed use development of up to 1,434 dwellings, a two-form entry primary school, local centre (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 and D1 including community building D1/D2), public open space, play areas and associated infrastructure and landscaping; and a full application for the proposed Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), associated landscaping and temporary car park. – To be read in conjunction with applications 190900 & 190914.

**Applicant:** Keir Ventures Ltd and Miller Homes Ltd

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 277 to 416.

The Committee were advised that the Members update included:

- Clarification that the expiry date was 28 May 2021;
- Clarification that the comments contained on agenda pages 407 to 411 were Wokingham Without Parish Council's initial comments submitted on 5 September 2019, and their revised comments contained on pages 412 to 413 were received on 28 September 2020;
- Clarification of condition 66.

**RESOLVED** That application number 191068 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 280 to 315, and amended condition 66 as set out in the Members' Update.

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