

Agenda Item 19.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
211398	5 August 2021	Woodley and Winnersh	Loddon and Winnersh

Applicant	Hochsoll Properties Ltd
Site Address	Former Showcase Cinema Car Park/Park and Ride Site, Loddon Bridge and The Bader Way Interchange, Loddon Bridge, Winnersh RG41 5HG
Proposal	Full application for the proposed change of use of the former car park to the storage of materials, shoring and temporary works equipment and vehicles associated with civil engineering business (Use Class B8), including welfare unit, gates, and fencing
Type	Full
Officer	Simon Taylor
Reason for determination by committee	Major application (>1 hectare)

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday 14 July 2021
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Place

SUMMARY

The site lies to the rear of the existing Showcase Cinema building and the A3290 at Winnersh. It was originally constructed as a Park and Ride facility operated by Wokingham Council in the early to mid-1990s, but the use has since ceased with the redevelopment and expansion of Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride, which provides more convenient connections with rail services. It falls on the settlement edge, with about 5% of the site at its northern end within the countryside.

The subject application seeks to utilise the existing car park including hardstanding for the storage of materials, shoring and temporary works equipment and vehicles associated with a civil engineering business. It also includes a welfare cabin building, fencing and some landscaping works.

The identified issues relate to its location within Flood Zone 3, retention and protection of the adjacent bridleway, noise disturbance to residential properties, retention of landscaping and the impression upon the character of the area. Broad support has been received from consultees and the parish councils and adjoining parish councils. Whilst there were a number of letters of support, these emanate from outside the consultation area, with six letters of objection from properties to the west of the site in Colemans Moor Lane.

Given the surrounding area, there is an acceptable impression on the character of the area, there are no adverse traffic implications, noise disturbances will remain within acceptable levels and flooding protection is maintained. Subject to Condition 3 requiring additional tree planting (including along the western boundary with the bridleway and the River Loddon), Condition 5 limiting the hours of use, Condition 6 limiting the height of external storage and Condition 7 prohibiting any external lighting or amplification, it represents a satisfactory reuse of a redundant parcel of land.

PLANNING STATUS

- Part Major Development Location (majority of site)
- Part Countryside (northern part of site)
- WBC owned land (flyover)
- Public Right of Way along western and northern edges of site
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan - Proposed New Route
- Flood Zone 3
- Veteran trees to western boundary (Ash, Alder x2, Willow and Field Maple)
- Bat consultation zone
- Adjacent to Biodiversity Opportunity Area
- Adjacent to Local Wildlife Site
- Sand and gravel extraction consultation zone
- Adjacent to classified road
- Adjacent to adopted highway

RECOMMENDATION

That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following 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 numbered 49583/4001/003, Rev B, dated 4 May 2021 and received by the local planning authority on 5 May 2021, the plan numbered QF-095, dated 20 March 2019 and received 6 May 2021 and the plans numbered 49583/4001/001, Rev H, dated 14 April 2021 and undated plan 010, both received on 28 June 2021. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, including site fencing, 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) Soft landscaping details

Prior to the commencement of the development, hereby permitted, a scheme of landscaping, which shall specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following first use of the site. 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.

4) Compliance with Arboricultural Method Statement

The development and any other operation hereby approved, shall take place in complete accordance with the recommendations of the Arboricultural Method Statement prepared by Arbtech dated 14 April 2021 and received 29 April 2021. (hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme).

No operations shall commence on site in connection with development hereby approved (including any tree felling or pruning, soil moving 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. 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.

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.

5) Hours of use

The opening hours of the site, including any operation or movement of machinery shall not operate other than between the hours of 7am-7pm, Monday to Saturday and 10am-5pm on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard residential amenities.

Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15, Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

6) External storage

Materials, goods, containers, plant and/or equipment shall not be stacked or deposited externally to a height exceeding 5.0m above the level of the ground at the location where they are stacked.

Reason: To safeguard the visual amenities of the area.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.

7) External lighting and amplification

Notwithstanding the 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 external lighting or amplified address system(s) shall be installed on the site or affixed to any buildings on the site without details first being submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of neighbour amenity and ecology.

Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15, Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies TB21 and TB23.

8) No change of use

The site shall be used only for Class B8 storage and for no other purpose, including any other purpose in Class B of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning [Use Classes] Order 1987 (as amended) or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order [with or without modification].

Reason: In granting this permission, it is pertinent to maintain suitable levels of neighbour amenity and the local planning authority wishes to have the opportunity of exercising control over any subsequent alternative use in the interests of the amenities of the area.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

9) Site operation restrictions

No washing down of plant or vehicles is to occur within the site and loose materials such as aggregates, chemicals or other similar items are not to be stored on the site.

Reason: To prevent discharge of foreign matter into the River Loddon.

Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Policy 15, Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC10.

Informatives

1) Woodley Footpath (PROW)

No materials are to be stored on the adjacent public right of way footpath to the west of the site.

2) Consultation with Rights of Way Team

The applicant is advised to contact the Council's Public Rights of Way team at localities.environmental@wokingham.gov.uk prior to the preparation of soft landscaping details as required by Condition 3. This is to ensure that there is no impediment to access along the adjacent public right of way footpath and any associated improvement works that might necessitate the unnecessary removal of established vegetation.

3) Section 106 agreements for the Park and Ride use

The original approval for the Park and Ride site (ref: 43748) and a subsequent extension to the car park (ref: F/1999/70438) were subject to obligations between the applicant and the Council as contained within respective s106 legal agreements. As the obligations apply to respective successors in title, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that these obligations are discharged, where appropriate.

4) Pre commencement conditions

Where this permission requires further details to be submitted for approval, the information must formally be submitted to the Council for consideration with the relevant fee. Once 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.

5) Changes to the approved plans

The applicant is reminded that should there be any change from the approved drawings during the build of the development this may require a fresh planning application if the changes differ materially from the approved details. Non-material changes may be formalised by way of an application under s.96A Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

6) Advertisement consent

This permission does not convey or imply any approval or consent that may be required for the display of advertisements on the site for which a separate Advertisement Consent application may be required. You should be aware that the display of advertisements without the necessary consent is a criminal offence liable to criminal prosecution proceedings through the courts.

7) Protected species

This permission does not convey or imply any approval or consent required under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 for protected species. The applicant is advised to contact Natural England with regard to any protected species that may be found on the site.

Should any bats or evidence of bats be found prior to or during the development, all works must stop immediately, and an ecological consultant or the Council's ecologist contacted for further advice before works can proceed. All contractors working on

site should be made aware of the advice and provided with the contact details of a relevant ecological consultant.

8) 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 being undertaken by the applicant and amended plans being submitted by the applicant to overcome concerns relating to neighbour amenity.

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

App No.	Description	Decision/Date
36429 (outline)	Multiplex cinema, car park, drive through restaurant, habitats resource centre and flood storage	Approved 15 November 1990
37437	Park and ride facility	Approved 29 May 1991
37438	Bus shelter and café	Refused 29 May 1991
37448	Revised access to cinema site	Approved 12 February 1992
43748	Multiplex cinema and car park	Approved 27 July 1995
VAR/1996/63577	Variation of Condition 16 of 43748	Refused 25 September 1996
VAR/1996/63877	Variation of Condition 17 of 43748	Refused 26 July 1996
F/1996/64263	Single storey security building	Approved 8 October 1996
A/1996/64281	Illuminated projecting sign	Approved 1 November 1996
VA/1996/64283	Relaxation of Condition 6 of 43748 to allow extended working hours	Approved 21 October 1996
VAR/1996/64611	Variation of Condition 16 of 43748 to allow cinema and park and ride facility with amended traffic lights signalling in lieu of bridge	Approved 23 October 1997
A/1997/65962	Two flagpoles	Approved 15 August 1997
ALUD/1999/1020 F/1999/70438	First floor extension to cinema	Approved 6 June 2001
F/2004/1207	First floor extension to cinema	Not proceeded with
F/2015/0415	New shopfront	Approved 7 April 2015
181761	Enclosure of outdoor seating area to create shop	Approved 14 August 2018

SUMMARY INFORMATION

	Existing	Proposed
Site area	Approximately 2.8 hectares (Park and Ride site)	1.5 hectares of Park and Ride site used
Land use	Transport facility (car park)	External storage (Class B8)

Floorspace	0m2	30m2 (welfare building)
Employment	0	10 FTE and 30 part time
Parking spaces	1040 (including cinema car park to the south)	Loss of 530 spaces on Park and Ride site
Trees	2 plus eight groups of trees	Partial removal of five groups

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WBC Env. Health	No objection, subject to measures and restrictions in Condition 5 relating to minimise neighbour amenity impacts (noise).
WBC Drainage	No objection.
WBC Highways	No objection, subject to a condition relating to parking and turning.
WBC Trees and Landscaping	No objection, subject to Condition 3, requiring replacement and additional tree planting and retention of existing trees in details to be submitted.
WBC Public Rights of Way	No objection, subject to Informative 1.
WBC Policy	No objection.
WBC Ecology	No comments received
Environment Agency	No comments were received within the statutory consultation period and the Council is entitled to make a recommendation.
WBC Waste Services	No comments received
WBC Property Services	
Thames Water	

REPRESENTATIONS

Woodley Parish Council	No objection.
Winnersh Parish Council	<p>The following observations are provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower parts of the site flood more often than every five years as suggested in the flood risk assessment. • Additional screen planting is required along the boundaries to the highway and the river <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The flood risk assessment acknowledges anecdotal evidence of regular flooding more often than stated in the EA modelling, and this is factored in in the considerations. Refer to paragraph 45.</p> <p>Landscaping enhancement is required, including along the western boundary, in Condition 3.</p>
Earley Parish Council (adjoining)	No objection, subject to conditions regarding the type and location of boundary treatments; landscaping details; controls over lighting; footpath and bridleway provisions and hours of use.

	<p><u>Officer comment:</u> Refer to Conditions 3, 5 and 8 and Informatives 1 and 2. The fencing details are adequate and form part of the approved details (see Condition 2).</p>
Ward Members	<p>Councillor Bray supports the proposal, subject to screen planting along the boundaries to the highway and the river and a flood evacuation plan (with alternative parking area).</p> <p>Councillor Fishwick made the following observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional tree screening would be welcome • The river floods more often than every five years as suggested in the flood risk assessment <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Refer to comments above.</p>
Neighbours	<p>The application was consulted to neighbours from 6-27 May 2021. Submissions against the proposal were received from the following properties, all of which lay opposite the site:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Colemans Moor Road, Woodley RG5 4DL (no house supplied) 2) Colemans Moor Road, Woodley RG5 4DL (no house supplied) 3) Colemans Moor Road, Woodley RG5 4DL (no house supplied) 4) Colemans Moor Road, Woodley RG5 4DL (no house supplied) 5) 4 Colemans Moor Road, Woodley RG5 4DL 6) 6 Colemans Moor Road, Woodley RG5 4DL 7) 10 Colemans Moor Road, Woodley RG5 4DL <p>The submissions raised the following issues:</p> <p>Trees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree removal is occurring despite the planning statement suggesting otherwise • Tree removal along western boundary should not be allowed to ensure continued screening and privacy of the site with additional planting required • Should be returned to woodland <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Tree removal is limited only to that required for the palisade fence and is required to be replaced and enhanced in Condition 3. It is not feasible to revert to its original state prior to the development of the site as a Park and Ride.</p> <p>Neighbour amenity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light spill and noise disturbance from users, vehicles, and generators • No additional lighting should be permitted • What limits to hours of use are there? <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Hours of use are discussed in paragraph 29 and no additional lighting is proposed. Light spill is considered in paragraph 30 and not considered an issue.</p>

Flooding and drainage

- Discharge of chemicals to the River Loddon should be prevented
- Emergency evacuation of materials should be ensured during flooding events
- Washing down should not then flow into the River Loddon

Officer comment: By Condition 8, there will be no chemicals stored on site or washing down of vehicles and movement of items off site during a flooding event is considered in the flood risk assessment and considered to be acceptable. Condition 9 prohibits the washing down of plant and equipment on the site.

Ecology

- Loss of wildlife from tree removal and operation of lighting

Officer comment: The tree removal is limited to minor undergrowth and is to be replaced and enhanced by Condition 3. No external lighting is proposed, and this is enforced in Condition 8.

Character

- Fencing is unattractive

Officer comment: The fencing is acceptable for security purposes and no objection is raised, as noted in paragraph 22.

Other

- How will WBC use the funds from the sale of the land?
- How will Hichsoll enrich and support the local area

Officer comment: These comments are not relevant to the planning application.

- Submissions in support of the proposal are directly related to the applicant and not from the immediate area

Officer comment: This is noted.

Submissions **in support** were received from the following properties, none of which lie within 400m of the site:

- 8) Coppice Road, Woodley RG5 3RA (no house supplied)
- 9) Harvard Close, Woodley RG5 4UJ (no house supplied)
- 10) Foxglade House, 356 Wokingham Road, Earley RG6 7DE
- 11) 156 Fullbrook Avenue, Spencers Wood RG7 1FJ
- 12) Skylark Way, Shinfield RG2 9AD (no house supplied)
- 13) 12 Taynton Walk, Reading RG2 0BB

- 14) Josephine Court, 18 Southcote Road, Reading RG30 2DG
- 15) Craig Avenue, Norcot RG30 2PF (no house supplied)
- 16) 19 Hagbourne Close, Woodcote RG8 0RZ
- 17) 42 Gatcombe Close, Calcot RG31 4XQ
- 18) 6 Tylers Place, Tilehurst RG30 6BW

The submissions raised the following:

- Will bring employment
- Reuse of a derelict site
- Will improve the character of the area
- Will stop anti-social behaviour

Officer comment: The above factors weigh in favour of the proposal, as noted in the conclusion at the end of the report.

One **neutral** comment was received from:

- 19) 36 Loddon Bridge Road, Woodley RG5 4AS

It raised the following:

- Site floods more often than the FRA suggests
- Vegetation along the western boundary should be retained as a flood defence

Officer comment: These comments have been addressed above.

APPLICANTS POINTS

The site has been used for the parking of cars and use by large commercial vehicles (buses) in the past, with access to Bader Way. It is a noisy area with existing development of road and rail infrastructure. The site is very well-contained physically and visually, with the tree bank, the elevated road and access ramp, and the raised Bader Way.

The land has laid unused for many years. The proposed use is an ideal way to reintroduce a use on previously developed that that has economic benefits. Paragraph 117 of the NPPF seeks the more efficient use of land, stating that "*Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses... Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land*".

Much of the site is within the settlement boundary, and paragraph 118 states that planning decisions should "*give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land*".

With regards to the small area of land outside the settlement boundary, paragraph 84 states that '*The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.*'

The proposals will bring economic benefits, with 40 jobs created on the site. Paragraph 80 of the NPPF states that “*Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development*”.

Paragraph 38 of the NPPF states that “*Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should... work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area*”.

One of the overarching objectives of sustainable development, as set out in paragraph 8 of the NPPF, is the economic objective, namely “*to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure*”.

The proposed development would satisfy this objective. The proposal would lead to economic benefits, to which substantial weight must be attached. This submission has demonstrated there would not be any conflict with the relevant policies of the development plan, with suitable planning conditions ensuring control over the form of development: the fences and the welfare cabin. The pre-application response from the Council found that the proposed development would be consistent with the development plan’s sustainable development objectives, and with the NPPF.

The strong support in the NPPF, and the absence of any conflict with planning policies, therefore, point to permission being able to be granted.

PLANNING POLICY		
National Policy	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
	NPPG	National Planning Policy Guidance
Core Strategy 2010	CP1	Sustainable Development
	CP3	General Principles for Development
	CP6	Managing Travel Demand
	CP7	Biodiversity
	CP9	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
	CP10	Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network
	CP11	Proposals outside Development Limits
	CP15	Employment Development
Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	CC01	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	CC02	Development Limits
	CC03	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	CC05	Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks
	CC06	Noise
	CC07	Parking
	CC08	Safeguarding alignments of the Strategic Transport Network & Road Infrastructure
	CC09	Development and Flood Risk
	CC10	Sustainable Drainage
	TB11	Core Employment Areas
	TB12	Employment Skills Plan

	TB20	Service Arrangements and Deliveries for Employment and Retail Use
	TB21	Landscape Character
	TB23	Biodiversity and Development
Borough Design Guide	BDG	Section 5, 6 and 7.

PLANNING ISSUES

Description of Development

1. The proposal involves the part use (approximately 1.5 hectares) of the existing disused Showcase Cinema car park/Winnersh Park and Ride facility for the storage of materials and engineering and construction vehicles associated with a civil engineering business (use class B8). It is accompanied by a 30m² welfare building in the south eastern corner under the existing flyover, 2m high fencing around the site and some tree removal.

Description of Site

2. The site measures 2.5 hectares and comprises an open car park framed by mature trees around the northern, western, and southern boundaries and The Bader Way and interchange with the A3290 on the eastern boundary. The A3290 flyover intersects the southern end of the site. The site is at the edge of and predominantly within the settlement boundaries with the Showcase Cinema (and carpark) to the south, the River Loddon flowing along the western and northern boundaries with residential properties across the river to the west and countryside, the A329 and Winnersh Triangle Business Park to the east.

Principle of Development

Site History

3. Showcase Cinemas was approved in 1995, with 12 screens and 995 car parking spaces. It was contrary to the Development Plan at the time but approved, in part, to enable the development of a park and ride facility on the site to the north/rear. This permission was subject to a legal agreement for the Park and Ride.
4. F/1999/70438 then granted approval for a first-floor extension to the cinema complex, comprising of two additional screens with 42 additional car spaces. As part of the assessment of that application, the parking arrangement was acceptable with Condition 5 requiring sharing of the Park and Ride car park by the cinema and park and ride facility.
5. The cinema reopened in May following the Covid-19 lockdown period, but the Park and Ride is no longer in use, being replaced by the Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride at Winnersh Triangle railway station 220m to the south east.

Settlement Edge/Location with the Countryside

6. About 85% of the car park (1.25 hectares) is within the settlement limits of the major development location of Winnersh. Only the very northern end of the site (about 0.25

hectares) is designated countryside. The delineation arises because of the extension of the carpark, approved as part of F/1999/70438, came after the alignment of the settlement boundary in the Development Plan and it has not been changed since.

7. The principle of the proposed Class B8 use is acceptable within the settlement limits, and it satisfies the principles in the Core Strategy and the relevant policies in the MDD Local Plan, subject to consideration of other issues within the body of this report. It is also consistent with the intent of paragraph 118 of the NPPF, which gives substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs.
8. Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy does not normally permit development outside of development limits. Exceptions include where it involves a sustainable rural or recreational enterprise, does not lead to excessive expansion away from the original building and is contained within a building suitable for conversion.
9. Paragraph 80 of the NPPF seeks to create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt with significant weight placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking account of local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
10. Paragraph 83 also aims to promote the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings and the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses. It must, however, be read in the context of paragraph 84, which states that it is *'important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.'*
11. A Class B use within this countryside site does not strictly comply with Policy CP11, but it would meet the purposes of the policy in terms of maintaining the quality of the environment and it would be consistent with the overriding intent of NPPF, which aims to sustain economic growth and to allow businesses to expand.
12. Only a small part of the site encroaches into the countryside, and it is already developed as a car park. The proposed use is acceptable within the settlement limits, allows for a suitable adaptive reuse of the site and is well contained by existing development such as the A329. On this basis and when subject to Condition 3 requiring landscape screening, no objection is raised.

Loss of Transport Facilities

13. Policy CP10 of the Core Strategy states that improvements to the Strategic Transport Network will be provided to ameliorate major environmental or safety problems and to support new development in partnership with other authorities. Policy CC08 of the MDD Local Plan then states that proposals which would compromise the implementation of the Strategic Transport Network and for other transport related schemes would not be supported.

14. The Park and Ride facility operated by Wokingham Council has since ceased to exist because it is prone to flooding and the redevelopment and expansion of Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride allows better connectivity with rail services. As such, the loss of the defunct park and ride facility at Showcase would not compromise the delivery of high-quality express bus services or mass rapid transit along the A4 and A3290 corridors as identified in the Development Plan and the principle of the proposed use is acceptable.

Core Employment Areas

15. Policy CP15 of the Core Strategy permits business/industry within Core Employment Areas and elsewhere within development limits where it involves redevelopment, refurbishment, or minor extension of buildings in employment use. Policy TB11 of the MDD Local Plan also aims to direct employment growth in Core Employment Areas.
16. The site is not nominated as a Core Employment Area, it involves the introduction of a new employment use (rather than redevelopment, refurbishment, or minor extension) and is partly outside of the development limits. However, it has good accessibility, involves adaptive reuse of an existing car park without modification or environmental harm and it is within walking distance of the Winnersh Triangle Core Employment Area. On this basis, no in principle objection is raised.

Sustainability

17. Policies CP1, CP6, CP9 and CP11 of the Core Strategy permit development where it is based on sustainable credentials and this is reinforced in Paragraphs 102, 103, 108 and 110 of the NPPF. With good vehicular access to the A3290 and being within walking distance to facilities and services at Showcase Cinema, Winnersh Triangle, rail services at Winnersh Triangle Train Station as well as access to public rights of way and cycle infrastructure, the site is well suited for reducing car dependency for staff. It is also worth noting the the prospective client will serve the local area, reducing the length of trips made by vehicles being stored on the site.

Character of the Area

18. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, layout and character of the area and must be of high-quality design. NR1, NR2 and NR3 of the Borough Design Guide states development should have positive design features and respond to key characteristics of the site.
19. Most of the site is laid with hardstanding (comprising of in excess of 500 car spaces and aisles) with the remainder consisting of pockets of vegetation beds within and around the edges of the site softening the character of the area. The site itself is well contained along the west by trees lining the River Loddon and by roads - The Bader Way and the flyover to the eastern and southern boundaries.
20. The provision of the welfare building, site fencing and external storage all contribute to a minor cumulative change to the character of the area. Tree removal is discussed in paragraphs 40 and 41.



Looking north under the A3290 overpass, including the area of the welfare cabin

21. The welfare building measures 9.8m (l) x 3.0m (w) x 2.7m (h) and has a form not dissimilar to a shipping container albeit with windows to each elevation. Whilst contributing little in architectural appeal, it is sited in the south eastern corner underneath the flyover where it will not contribute to any significant impression on the streetscene. Against the backdrop of the road above, no objection is raised.
22. NR12 requires consideration of boundary treatments. The fencing is necessary to secure the site and would include close boarded fencing to the western boundary and steel palisade fencing to the rest of the boundary, all to a height of 2m. In the south eastern corner opposite the Wharfedale Road roundabout, the close boarded fencing is setback at least 5m from the kerb and positioned behind landscaping, where it will appear less prominent in views. Extending to the north, it is below the flyover and increasingly separated from the on ramp to the A3290 such that it does not pose an unreasonable streetscape imposition. The palisade fencing around the remainder of the site is acceptable on account of its open nature and because it does not present to any street frontage. Where it adjoins the right of way along the western boundary, it will be supplemented by landscaping as negotiated in Condition 3.
23. The type of storage includes temporary works equipment, groundwork equipment and materials, including concrete pipes, bracing, trench sheets, road plates, formwork panels, prefabricated structures, and smaller items for groundwork equipment that is stored in containers for security and safety purposes. It would not include mounds of spoil or materials.
24. The vehicles are estimated to a height of approximately 4m, but it was proposed that plant would extend to a height of 8m. This is viewed as excessive and to maintain a degree of orderliness and to restrict the impacts associated with large numbers of structures projecting above the site, Condition 6 limits the height of external storage to 5m. It would otherwise prove difficult to control/condition the management of storage within the site but because of there is no storage of aggregate and most of the items are larger, bulkier items, it is not envisaged that there would be a mismanaged or disorderly appearance to the storage of items within the site. Further, the site is at least 1m lower than the road level in the south eastern corner of the site,

increasing to 2.5m at the north eastern corner. Coupled with a 2m high fence around the site and existing and enhanced landscaping along the western boundary, the storage will not be apparent to a height of 5m and will project only marginally above the fence level.



Tree coverage to the west of the site and the change in level to the east of the site

25. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF aims to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes, and nature conservation. No new lighting is proposed and is controlled as such by Condition 7. This would protect the edge of settlement location.
26. Policy CC02 of the MDD Local Plan states that development at the edge of settlements is acceptable where it is demonstrated that it is within development limits and respects the transition to the open countryside and RD9 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires an edge and incorporation of soft landscaping to integrate to the rural setting. There is a technical non-compliance with the above requirements because there would, in effect, be a hard edge. However, it is existing and otherwise well contained by natural and built features such that no objection is raised.

Residential Amenities

27. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity and Policy CC06 and Appendix 1 of the MDD Local Plan requires that development protect noise sensitive receptors from noise impact.
28. The site is relatively conducive to a Class B8 use, with the countryside to the east, Winnersh Triangle to the south east and a bank of trees lining the River Loddon on the west. The nearest residential properties are 80m to the west across the River Loddon on Colemans Moor Lane. A total of seven objections were received from properties in Colemans Moor Lane with two raising concern on noise disturbance grounds.
29. A Noise Assessment was not submitted with the application and the applicant has requested proposed hours of use are 7am-7pm, Monday to Saturday and 10am-5pm on Sundays. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has reviewed the proposed arrangements and raised no objection. During operating hours, the background noise level would be dominated by traffic on the A3290, Wokingham Road, the on and off

ramps and the nearby railway line. Further, the storage use is generally less susceptible to continued high noise levels that are usually associated with a more industrial Class B use. The proposed hours of use are therefore appropriate. 24 hours access was also sought for after-hours parking of vehicles but not for operational activities. It is noted that the Park and Ride permission is unrestricted in this sense but it is also noteworthy that that permission is generally confined to AM and PM peak movement of buses and even then, on an intermittent basis. The ramifications of allowing 24-hour access for a Class B8 use is unreasonable on account of the background noise level in the surrounding area being much lower during the evening and night and noise sources arising from reversing lorries and unenforceable movements. Condition 5 is therefore worded to reflect the above arrangements.

30. The application does not include any proposed lighting and because of the separation and tree cover to the west, headlight glare is not envisaged to pose a concern.

Access and Movement

Parking

31. F/1999/70438 was approved on the basis of the dual use of the Park and Ride car park as overflow car parking for the cinema use and so the loss of this car parking requires consideration. Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan requires a minimum of 662 spaces for the cinema and retail use of the Showcase building. There are 530 car spaces within the Reading Road car park and 152 spaces to the north of the building – a surplus of 20 spaces.
32. Policy CC07 requires 1.2 spaces for the storage use. More realistically, though, with ten full time staff and 30 other part time staff, it is anticipated that many more car spaces would be required. There is ample space within the site to accommodate parking (and it is within easy walking distance of Winnersh Triangle station). 30 spaces are to be retained for parking alongside the welfare building in the south eastern corner. This is considered adequate and there is no concern with the parking provision. As the parking is already marked out and there are no current restrictions on where storage is to occur, it is not necessary to condition the parking provision.
33. Cycle parking will be in the form of the five existing covered Sheffield stands for 10 bicycles under the flyover, This is in excess of the standard and whilst it is not enclosed, the site is securely fenced, and the proposed arrangement is acceptable.

Traffic

34. A Transport Statement (Stantec, January 2021) was submitted with the application indicating vehicle types, trip movements and access. The development will have three 3-tonne diesel forklifts permanently on site, and four articulated HGVs, ten 7.5-32-tonne rigid HGVs and 15 3.5-tonne LGVs parked on site.
35. It is estimated that there would be 140 daily movements to and from the site. Whilst this represents an increase against the vacant site, it is significantly fewer movements than generated by the Park and Ride when it was in operation (approximately 720 daily movements). Regardless of any comparison, the site is

conveniently located at the on ramp to the A3290, which minimises any potential impact upon existing traffic movements on local roads, and the likely traffic generation is appropriate within the surrounding roads.

Access

36. The application was submitted with swept path plans which show internal manoeuvrability for larger HGVs is achieved subject to some existing areas remaining open. Forward movement to and from the site is achieved, there is sufficient waiting area at the entrance to ensure that a 13.5m low loader would not affect existing highway movements at the entrance gate and there are adequate visibility sightlines at the existing entrance.

Public Rights of Way

37. Woodley Footpath 4 extends along the western and northern boundary along the eastern side of the River Loddon. There are no encroachments upon the right of way though Informative 1 notes that no materials being stored on the footpath.
38. Strategically, the Council is aiming to upgrade the footpath, including surface and width to accommodate cycle and horse riders as part of the Loddon Long Distance Path. The applicant has been in discussion with the Council on this aspect and nothing in this application would hinder this process. The design of the steel palisade fence along the boundary creates a somewhat industrial appearance but would be able to be mitigated with suitable planting in the future, as to be negotiated in Condition 3.

Landscaping and Trees

39. Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan aims to protect green infrastructure networks, retain existing trees, and establish appropriate landscaping and Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character.
40. A Tree Survey and Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) were submitted with the application. Some minor tree removal would be required along the western boundary to accommodate the fence alongside the right of way. The AMS is not entirely clear with the extent of tree removal as the trees are grouped rather than individually nominated. However, the extent of tree loss is minimal, being limited to lower undergrowth with none of the prominent trees affected. The tree removal is only necessary to accommodate the security of the site. Trees that are lost will be replaced and enhanced (additional planting will be required) in a Tree Planting Strategy and landscape plan in Condition 3. This would need to be undertaken in consultation with the Council's Rights of Way team, as noted in Informative 2.
41. Construction of the fence postholes within the root protection areas of trees are to be hand dug as required by the AMS and detailed in Condition 4. Given the existing vegetation is contained within planters and around the perimeter of the site, it is unlikely that the site operations will lead to a gradual degradation of the landscape quality of the site.

Ecology

42. Policy TB23 of the MDD Local Plan requires the incorporation of new biodiversity features, buffers between habitats and species of importance and integration with the wider green infrastructure network. The site is within an area where bats have been found and is also adjacent to a Biodiversity Opportunity Area and Local Wildlife Site, with the River Loddon and Dinton Pastures Country Park to the north providing suitable habitat. However, given there are no physical works to the site and no external lighting forming part of the proposal, there are no adverse ecological impacts. Fencing around the western and southern boundaries is open in form and allows wildlife movement. Fencing along the eastern boundary is close boarded but given it adjoins the on ramp to the A3290, it is highly unlikely that wildlife would be impeded in their movements.

Waste Storage

43. Waste generation is limited to that from workers on site. A wheely bin adjacent to the welfare cabin is proposed, which is acceptable, and no specific conditioning is required.

Flooding and Drainage

44. Policy CC09 of the MDD Local Plan requires consideration of flood risk from historic flooding and Policy CC10 requires sustainable drainage methods and the minimisation of surface water flow. The site is located alongside the River Loddon which accommodates flows from South Lake and Bearwood Lake. It is mostly within Flood Zone 3a and 3b (functional floodplain) with parts in the south eastern corner in Flood Zone 2. It has a high probability of flooding and is also surrounded by flood vulnerable areas. Environment Agency modelling indicates a 1 in 20-year probability of flooding (5%). There is also a high risk (1 in 30 year) of surface flooding concentrated in the southern end of the site.
45. Anecdotal evidence from residents suggests that flooding occurs more frequently, and this is recognised in the Flood Risk Assessment (Stantec, January 2021) that was submitted with the application. It refers to the design of the Park and Ride car park as being designed to flood from the River Loddon at relatively frequent intervals as part of local flood alleviation measures.
46. There is no change to the less vulnerable land classification and hence no increase in vulnerability associated with the change of use to Class B8 storage. There is no change to access points and full-time staff is limited to ten. The amount of hardstanding is also unchanged, ground levels are unaltered and new fencing along the River Loddon will be steel palisade, such that there is unlikely to be any additional impediment to floodwaters.
47. The only development on the site comprises the welfare cabin, which is not a permanent structure, and it is sited in the highest part of the site (39.30 AOD). It will be 300mm above the minimum 1 in 100-year flood level plus 20% climate change (38.97 AOD). Whilst it is a portacabin style building, it sits above flood level and is unlikely to be affected by floodwaters. Most of the plant and construction vehicles are weather proof but items that are vulnerable would need to be moved from the site to higher ground. It is envisaged that safe access could occur via the existing access

point on Bader Way with the aid of the EA flood warning system. There is no proposal to store aggregates or similar materials that would prove difficult to relocate or be washed away.

48. The existing car park drainage remains in place which involves discharge to the River Loddon. As there are no changes to the surfacing, the current infrastructure is sufficient to accommodate runoff and there is no requirement for additional works. The Council's Drainage Officer is satisfied with this approach. Bulk materials such as aggregates will not be stored on the site and so there is no risk of adverse discharge of materials into the River Loddon.
49. The Flood Risk Assessment makes no specific recommendations and so it is unnecessary for it to be conditioned. The Environment Agency were consulted but no response was received.

Contamination

50. There is no known contamination of the site.

Accessibility (including The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010))

51. 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 that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities.

Employment Skills

52. Policy TB12 of the MDD Local Plan states that major development should be accompanied by an Employment and Skills Plan to show how it accords opportunities for training, apprenticeship, or other vocational initiatives. However, when considering the very limited nature of the construction works and that it relates to an existing civil engineering business, there is insufficient justification for an employment skills plan.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

53. The application is not liable for CIL payments because the increase in floor area is less than 100m².

CONCLUSION

54. The existing Park and Ride site has remained redundant for several years and whilst it will result in additional clutter within the site and the loss of some landscaping, the proposal represents a positive adaptive reuse for the site. It is suitably located on acoustic amenity and traffic grounds, being located alongside the A3290, and despite its location within the floodplain, it does not pose any increase in flood risk or vulnerability. Subject to additional landscaping in Condition 3 and restrictions relating to hours of use and the height of external storage (Conditions 6 and 7), no objection is raised.