

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 11 AUGUST 2021 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.13 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Chris Bowring (Chairman), Angus Ross (Vice-Chairman), Sam Akhtar, Stephen Conway, Pauline Jorgensen, Andrew Mickleburgh, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey and Bill Soane

Councillors in Attendance

Councillors: Gary Cowan

Councillors Present and Speaking

Councillors: Michael Firmager and Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

Officers Present

Connor Corrigan, Service Manager - Planning and Delivery
Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager
Sean O'Connor, Head of Legal Services
Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

Case Officers Present

Mark Croucher
Christopher Howard
Senjuti Manna
Simon Taylor

20. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Carl Doran and Rebecca Margetts.

Gary Cowan attended the meeting virtually, and was therefore marked as in attendance, and was not able to propose, second, or vote on items.

21. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 July 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

22. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Bill Soane declared a personal and prejudicial interest in items 26, 27, and 28. Bill stated that he would leave the room for entirety of these items and take no part in the discussions or votes.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey declared a prejudicial interest in item 30. Rachelle stated that she would leave the room for entirety of this item and take no part in the discussion or vote.

Stephen Conway declared a personal interest in items 26, 27, and 28, on the grounds that his son had worked in the café on the site between ten and twelve years ago amongst a number of other school children. Stephen added that he would continue to take part in both the discussions and votes for these items.

Stephen Conway declared a personal interest in item 30, on the grounds that he had been referred the applicant at one point for a medical issue. Stephen added that he had not been in contact with the applicant since, and would therefore take full part in both the discussion and vote for this item.

23. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

No applications were recommended for deferral, or withdrawn.

24. APPLICATION NO.211024 - LAND AT ARBORFIELD GARRISON PARCEL V1S, NORTH OF NUFFIELD ROAD/LAKESIDE BUS ROUTE, ARBORFIELD

Applicant: Bloor Homes Ltd

Proposal: Application for approval of Reserved Matters pursuant to Outline Planning Consent O/2014/2280 dated 02/04/2015. The Reserved Matters (access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) comprise details of 126 dwellings within parcel V1S with access via the Lakeside Bus Loop, associated internal access roads, parking, landscaping, open space, footpaths and drainage.

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 13 to 46.

The Committee were advised that there were no updates within the Supplementary Planning Agenda.

Rebecca Fenn-Tripp, on behalf of the applicant, spoke in support of the application. Rebecca stated that the site had been granted outline planning permission, and this application sought reserved matters approval for 126 high quality homes. The site would include 25 affordable homes, delivering twenty percent on-site provision of affordable housing, in line with the S106 agreement. Rebecca stated that the development incorporated a variety of house types, materials, and architectural details to provide sufficient interest and differentiation across the site. Rebecca added that all of the proposed dwellings met or exceeded national space standard requirements, whilst the site would also meet the Borough's parking standards, whilst also incorporating electric vehicle charging points. The proposals would include the planting of 43 new trees in addition to new hedgerows, whilst retaining the three mature oak trees found on-site. Rebecca concluded by stating that the proposals would provide a ten percent reduction in carbon emissions including via the provision of photovoltaic panels.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried whether electric vehicle charging infrastructure would be put in place across the site to allow activation when needed, queried whether photovoltaic panels would be offered to residents, and queried whether there were any plans to install heat pumps across the development. Christopher Howard, case officer, stated that condition 5 set out the requirements relating to electric vehicle charging. Christopher added that it was up to the developer as to how they wished to install, or offer up for installation, photovoltaic panels.

Stephen Conway queried whether thirty-five percent affordable housing would be delivered on-site across the wider SDL. Christopher Howard stated that this application would deliver twenty percent on-site affordable housing, and a monetary contribution for fifteen percent off-site affordable housing, in line with the S106 agreement made at outline. The off-site contribution would go towards affordable housing developments across the

Borough, an example of which could be seen at the Gorse Ride redevelopment. Connor Corrigan, Service Manager - Planning and Delivery, clarified that it was agreed at outline to allow off-site contributions towards affordable housing, and it was down to Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) to decide where the off-site affordable houses should be developed. Across the wider SDL, twenty percent of the homes would be affordable whilst a contribution for the equivalent of fifteen percent affordable housing would be received in line with the S106 agreement.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether all associated infrastructure relating to electric vehicle charging including transformers would be installed at the point of development of the site, queried whether the decision to provide twenty percent on-site affordable housing was at the request of the developer or WBC, and queried whether a specific condition should be included to secure a biodiversity net gain on-site. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that it was not that onerous to install an electric vehicle charging meter in a house. The electricity load would come off of the meter supply for that home, and the load would be balanced. Standalone facilities such as a car park or spaces on the highway, separate infrastructure would be required. It was conditioned for the developer to set out in detail where the 43 active charging spaces and the 46 passive spaces would be placed, whilst ensuring that infrastructure was in place prior to commencement of works. Connor Corrigan stated that that WBC had taken the decision to a portion of off-site affordable housing contributions. Connor added that biodiversity improvements would be seen as a part of this development, and noted that the outline application was approved prior to the requirements for developments to achieve a ten percent biodiversity net gain. The overall SDL would achieve a biodiversity net gain, for example via the provision of SANGs.

Pauline Jorgensen commented that she would like to know more details about the site to work out what level of biodiversity net gain was achievable. Pauline queried what protection would be given to the two mature oak trees which were proposed to be situated near residential houses, and queried whether any protection could be given to require any future HMOs on site to seek planning permission. Connor Corrigan stated that the mature oak trees would have a root protection area and the site had a conditioned landscape management plan. In addition, Connor stated that the Tree officer was content with the proposals and it was not envisaged that there would be any ongoing issues. Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management, Stated that at the moment a C3 to C4 conversion required no planning permission to create a small HMO, and there would have to be a very good reason to restrict this on this site.

Angus Ross commented that until there was a policy change, electric vehicle charging and biodiversity issues would continue to be a frustration for the Committee. Angus queried whether payments for both SANGs and SAMM had been made at outline. Connor Corrigan confirmed that the S106 agreement required these payments to come forward as the site was developed.

Gary Cowan commented that it was difficult to condition when there was no specific policy in place for some issues. Gary added that policy CP5 fixed thirty-five percent of affordable houses for all of the SDLs, and he was not particularly in favour of reducing the on-site provision of these affordable houses. Gary stated that he was overall supportive of this application, and noted that the overall SDL site had good and regular communication between the developers, residents and Town and Parish Councils.

Sam Akhtar sought details regarding to asbestos and lead contamination of the soil on site. Connor Corrigan stated that this site was a former MOD site, and part of the outline decision was for site surveys to be carried out. Asbestos and lead contaminated soil would be transported to a licensed site, and replaced with new soil. A considerable amount of work had been carried out to ensure that the site was safe for development and habitation.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried where the homes would be built using the off-site affordable housing contribution. Connor Corrigan stated that the planning requirement was to collect the contributions, and it was up to the WBC housing team to decide where the money would be best spent.

RESOLVED That application number 211024 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 14 to 18.

25. APPLICATION NO.210179 - SAND MARTINS GOLF CLUB, FINCHAMPSTEAD ROAD, WOKINGHAM

Applicant: Sand Martins Golf Club Limited

Proposal: Full Planning application for the proposed part single, part two storey side/rear extension to existing clubhouse, erection of a detached Hotel Building comprising 39no. bedrooms, function rooms, kitchen and staff room, with car parking, servicing, associated landscape enhancements and an electrical sub-station.

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 47 to 82.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the Supplementary Planning agenda included a correction to the Wokingham Town Council comment, which the report mistakenly stated that 'Pedestrian and cycle access should be approved', whereas it should have correctly stated 'improved'.

Peter Edwards, agent, spoke in support of the application. Peter stated that the club owners maintained their unwavering desire to commit to the club despite national lockdowns. An earlier proposal had been withdrawn, and the new design team had been tasked to produce a proposals which would complement the existing golf club, diversify its offer to provide financial resilience, provide facilities which would be beneficial to the wider community, and provide landscaping and ecological requirements. Peter stated that the original golf club had permission for a small hotel, which had kindled the idea for a venue building to be run by the club to be used for weddings, conferences, small functions and exhibitions. This venue building would be supported by high quality guest accommodation, a bar, and breakfast room. Peter stated that a new high quality restraint was proposed adjacent to the clubhouse, accessible to members and the wider community. Peter stated that biodiversity net gains would be achieved across the site, and the proposals were energy efficient and of a high quality design. Electric vehicle charging and heat pumps would also be provided where possible. Peter concluded by stating that photovoltaic panels would be provided on the clubhouse, and the proposals had been well received by the community.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether two vehicles could pass on the main access route to and from the site, and queried whether a higher BREEAM rating should be applied to this site as very good was the minimum standard for a public building. Mark Croucher, case officer, stated that two vehicles could pass each other on the main access route to the site.

Mark added that whilst he was not sure whether this facility constituted a public building, officers could not ask for more than the minimum BREEAM standard. Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management, stated that condition 22 required the site to meet the BREEAM ‘very good’ standard.

Sam Akhtar queried what was being done to ensure that bats were not adversely affected by the proposed development. Mark Croucher stated that condition 17 related to this, and the ecology officer had looked at this and was satisfied that the development would have an acceptable impact on bats subject to condition 17. A license would also be required from Natural England, which would look further into this issue, and as such officers were confident that adequate protections for bats were in place.

Angus Ross queried whether all vehicles would be required to access the site via the Finchampstead Road, and felt that the number of trees scheduled to be replaced should be stated. Mark Croucher stated that it was not physically possible for vehicles to traverse across the site from Evendons Lane, and therefore all access would be via Finchampstead Road. Mark stated that the recommendation relating to tree replacements was borne out of comments from the applicant’s agriculturalist, however there were no set numbers. There would be numerous replacement trees on site, and officers were satisfied that the planting would be maintained and the woodland planting would be strengthened.

Gary Cowan commented that it was very odd for planning officers to go against the tree officer’s objection to this application. Gary added that he was unsure how many trees would be removed, and felt that a condition should be required to ensure sufficient replacement trees and suitable total foliage replacement. Mark Croucher stated that the recommendation was not contrary to the tree officer’s objection, as officer agreed that there was some harm as a result of the proposals. Mark added that planning officers had to balance any harm against the benefits of the proposals. Mark felt that the landscape management plan was an appropriate way of dealing with the replacement of trees in appropriate locations.

Stephen Conway proposed an additional informative, asking the applicant to replace equivalent tree foliage to that being removed. This proposal was seconded by Andrew Mickleburgh, carried, and added to the list of informatives.

RESOLVED That application number 210179 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 48 to 53, and additional informative requesting proportionate tree foliage replacement as resolved by the Committee.

26. APPLICATION NO.211084 - HARE HATCH SHEEPLANDS, LONDON ROAD, HARE HATCH

This item contains the substantive minutes for agenda items 26, 27, and 28. The individual resolutions for each item are contained within their respective minute item.

Bill Soane declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item and therefore left the room and took no part in either the discussion or vote.

Applicant: Hare Hatch Sheeplands

Proposal: Full Planning application for the proposed change of use from Horticulture use to Exhibition Space (Use Class F1(e)) for the display of Haworthia and associated plants

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 83 to 108.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda included:

- Correction to condition 4 to include reference to other associated plants;
- Clarification that the information contained within paragraph 6a was incorrect, and that horticultural use was already being lawfully undertaken and that planning permission was never enacted for this purpose.

David Hall, agent, spoke in support of application 211084, 211085, and 211086. David stated that Hare Hatch Sheeplands (HHS) was a community minded business which had uses comprising of a plant nursery, café, butchers, garden shop, space for community events, and a farm shop. David added that HHS was a valued community asset, and the site had been operating on a fully authorised basis since July 2017. David stated that the horticultural business across the site had continued, however the horticultural industry in general was still under pressure due to Covid-19 and Brexit, amongst other issues. David stated that these issues and delays had interrupted the implementation of the temporary permissions previously granted for the site, the purpose of which was to allow the horticultural business to survive and develop whilst allowing sufficient time to review with the Council the requirements for the business and future plans for the wider area. David added that under these exceptional circumstances, the applications submitted were asking for two additional years to allow the business to develop, whilst providing the applicant with some certainty over the operations uses of the site, in line with the Inspector's decision. David stated that the enforcement notice and injunction remained in place, however they did not prohibit ancillary activities to the plant nursery such as the holding of events. Examples of the community focussed approach to the site included hosting flower shows, children's activities, activities relating to community events such as the RG10 front gardens competition (Twyford in Bloom), and food and drink tasting events. David stated that some of these events would take place during the winter when the greenhouses were not in full growing use, supporting the enterprise during the off-season. David stated that the applicant was disappointed that officers had only recommended a one year extension, as opposed to the two year extension requested by the applicant. David was of the opinion that a two year extension was seen to be a realistic approach to the timescale required for the applicant to work on the business during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, whilst simultaneously dealing with the consequences of Brexit. David felt that the suggestion that the pandemic having had a duration, currently, of 16 months equated to a similar timeframe for these operations for the business to restore itself to its pre-Covid trading pattern was unrealistic. David stated that the pandemic had not gone away, and the effects of both Covid-19 and Brexit would have ongoing effects which would make a one year extension an unrealistic period of time to develop the business sufficiently. Relating to application 211085, David was of the opinion that there was no planning justification for inserting condition 3e, since the application did not propose the sale of goods by retail. David added that it was a fact that no food or drink sales had been made from the events area, and any food or drink consumed in the area had been bought from the café or brought in by people visiting the events. Relating to application 211086, David raised concerns relating to proposed condition 3 as this was not required by the inspector at the appeal decision. David added that the Inspector had recognised the garden shop was required to help the horticultural business grow, and to allow a review of future plans for the site, and not to make a horticultural use viable. David was of the opinion that this

condition pre-supposed that a viable horticultural use was possible within the next year, which was a complete unknown and it was difficult to see how they would be achieved via an enforceable condition. David stated that it was not possible at the outset to comply with this condition, as the site operated lawful and permanent retail floor space within the farm shop. David asked that Members review the reasonability of the aforementioned conditions. David added that the applicant looked forward to continuing discussions with the Council on a strategy for moving the business forward in a comprehensive way, within the Council's policy and green belt framework.

Frank Moore, resident, submitted a statement in support of this applicant which was read out by Councillor Angus Ross. Frank stated that he was disappointed to read the proposed limitations being placed on applications 211084, 211085, and 211086. Frank was of the opinion that the proposed limitations had no relevance to the plans encompassed within the applications, and in many cases some of the comments were completely incorrect. Frank was of the opinion that Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) was trying to 'get their own back' on HHS, having lost a significant court case against them in the Court of Appeal in 2019. Frank reminded Members that Her Honour Lady Justice Hallett had stated that prosecution proceedings brought by WBC were unfair and an abuse of process. Frank felt that many of the added comments were in the same vain, and Frank strongly urged Members to ignore the added comments and simply appraise the applications correctly as submitted.

Chris Bowring queried whether condition 3e relating to application 211085 was a duplication of condition 3g. Simon Taylor, case officer, stated that 3e was a carryover of the original permission, and referenced the previous permission with regards to restricting retail sale in the events space. 3g strengthened and expanded upon 3e, and was specifically relating to events only.

Chris Bowring queried whether condition 3 relating to application 211086, requirement of a business plan, was not required by the Inspector. Simon Taylor stated that the Inspector had given three primary reasons for permission to be granted; to allow the business to grow, to allow time for review of the future intentions of the site, and to review the impact on the green belt and the countryside. WBC's view was that the temporary permission would not be continued unless they were satisfied that a viable business was operating without the retail use being there. Simon added that the Council would only be satisfied of this if there was a sound financial basis behind any submitted evidence.

Stephen Conway commented that this site had a long and complex planning history, and the appeal decision had allowed the applicant until 2022 to use the site as permitted. Stephen added that when permission was granted, Brexit and Covid-19 were not issues, and Stephen felt that it was ungenerous to only allow an additional year given these factors. Stephen was of the opinion that permission should be granted for all three applications until 14 March 2024, to balance the local community need and the harm caused. Simon Taylor stated that the exhibition space was considered for a one year permission to tie in with the other applications, the events use recognised that some events had been taking place through the periods of lockdown, whilst the temporary use for the purpose of retail had remained open for most of the lockdown period, demonstrating that the retail use within the nursery had been operating fairly successfully as had the farm shop. Simon added that weighing up all of the factors, a one year extension seemed entirely appropriate to officers.

Andrew Mickleburgh echoed the concerns and suggestions raised by Stephen Conway. Andrew queried why the permission being recommended for application 211084 was for one year when three years were being sought, queried whether there was a quantifiable reason to justify only a one year permission, and queried whether the length of any extension would have any bearing on any future planning application for this site, for example an application for permanent permission. Simon Taylor stated that the exhibition use was proposed for three years, commencing from today, and running through to 2024. This would have resulted in the permission extending for around six months longer than the other two applications. Simon added that it was a material change of use to include class F, which was contrary to green belt policy. A three year extension was seen as excessive as it was a horticultural nursery, and one year seemed reasonable, partly to align this permission to the other permissions. Simon stated that the retail use and the events use had almost seven months left on their permission, and an additional twelve months was proposed to allow a business plan to be developed to demonstrate their future intentions and use. Some discussions had occurred outside of the planning process regarding future intentions for the use, which had not been acceptable to WBC as of yet. Simon commented that the primary use of the site remained horticultural, and felt that these extensions did not set a precedent for a permanent garden centre or other such business.

Chris Bowring was of the opinion that at the time of the application the Inspector would have been aware of Brexit, and therefore felt that the Committee should focus on the effect that the pandemic has had on this site.

Angus Ross was of the opinion that it was best to apply the same end date for all three applications for the sake of consistency, and to avoid confusion. Angus was of the opinion that if these applications were allowed until 2024, it would be harder to refute any potential future application for permanent use if they were deemed to cause harm. Angus stated that he saw no reason to go against any of the officer recommendations.

Pauline Jorgensen queried how long it would take to prove that a successful horticultural business could exist with some other supporting ancillary uses. Simon Taylor stated that it was the Inspector's intent to grant temporary permission to hopefully allow the horticultural business to stand on its own without a retail element. There had been incremental growth of the use of the site over a long period of time. Simon added that WBC had some hesitancy to maintain the temporary periods, as the intentions of the applicant had not been clear over an extended period of time.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey was of the opinion that the planning history for this site was very complex. Rachelle added that, in her opinion, a one year extension seemed to be reasonable given the unforeseen circumstances faced by the applicant.

Stephen Conway was of the opinion that the Inspector could not have known the full details of Brexit, and the Committee had to consider whether it was reasonable to only grant a one year extension when the applicant had already faced 16 months of disruptions. Stephen was of the opinion that allowing temporary permission until 2024 for all three of the applications provided a balanced decision, and maintained control for WBC.

Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management, commented that officers were conscious of the difficulties that the business had faced, whilst also being conscious that part of the business had been open for some of the lockdown period. Justin added that the Inspector had felt that this development was inappropriate development

within the green belt. The view of officers was that this additional year was a reasonable compromise as it would end in 2023, given that the Inspectors decision was made in 2019.

Stephen Conway proposed that condition 1 be amended for application number 211084, to amend the terminal date from 14 March 2023 to 14 March 2024. This proposals was seconded by Andrew Mickleburgh, and upon being put to the vote the amendment fell.

Stephen Conway stated that in the spirit of keeping the all three applications in line with each other with the same terminal date, he would not propose amendments to either of the further applications.

RESOLVED That application number 211084 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 83 to 85, and correction to condition 4 as set out within the Supplementary Planning Agenda.

27. APPLICATION NO.211085 - HARE HATCH SHEEPLANDS, LONDON ROAD, HARE HATCH

Item 26 contains the substantive minutes for agenda items 26, 27, and 28. The individual resolutions for each item are contained within their respective minute item.

Bill Soane declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item and therefore left the room and took no part in either the discussion or vote.

Applicant: Hare Hatch Sheeplands

Proposal: Application to vary condition 1 of planning consent 192018 for the Full application for the Change of Use of three existing nursery glasshouses into events area relating to the existing nursery. Condition 1 refers to temporary permission and the variation is to extend temporary permission for two years.

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 109 to 130.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda included:

- Amended condition 3, in order to carry over part (iv) of the types of events allowed within the permission;
- Clarification that the information contained within paragraph 7a was incorrect, and that horticultural use was already being lawfully undertaken and that planning permission was never enacted for this purpose;
- Correction to paragraph 5 to correctly refer to application number 211084 as the correct application for the exhibition space.

RESOLVED That application number 211085 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 110 to 112, and amendment to condition 3 as set out within the Supplementary Planning Agenda.

28. APPLICATION NO.211086 - HARE HATCH SHEEPLANDS, LONDON ROAD, HARE HATCH

Item 26 contains the substantive minutes for agenda items 26, 27, and 28. The individual resolutions for each item are contained within their respective minute item.

Bill Soane declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item and therefore left the room and took no part in either the discussion or vote.

Applicant: Hare Hatch Sheeplands

Proposal: Full application for the continued use of existing sales area permitted temporarily under 173316 and change of use to include an additional sales area.

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 131 to 170.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda included:

- Clarification that the information contained within paragraph 6a was incorrect, and that horticultural use was already being lawfully undertaken and that planning permission was never enacted for this purpose;
- Correction to paragraph 10 to correctly refer to application number 211085 as the correct application for the extension of the temporary permission for events use.

RESOLVED That application number 211086 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 132 to 134.

29. APPLICATION NO.210693 - READING BLUE COAT SCHOOL, HOLME PARK, SONNING

Applicant: Mr Simon Jackson

Proposal: Application to vary condition 13 of 170118 and F/2010/1641 for the erection of a two-storey classroom block, construction of an internal access road (part temporary part permanent) and erection of two temporary buildings containing 4 classrooms following demolition of three existing classroom buildings. Condition 13 refers to pupils enrolled at the school and the variation is to allow for up to 1,100 pupils to be enrolled at the school

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 171 to 200.

The Committee were advised that updates contained within the Supplementary Planning Agenda included:

- Correction to the recommendation set out on agenda page 172, which should refer to the grant of planning permission of planning application 210693;
- Clarification that the AM peak was in relation to school arrivals in the morning between 7AM and 9AM;
- Clarification that the maximum additional vehicle movements referenced within paragraph 25 was the absolute maximum, and the real number was likely substantially lower across the two hour arrival period;
- Additional clarification of paragraphs 26 and 27, relating to vehicle movements from different routes to the school.

Trefor Fisher, Sonning Parish Council, spoke in support of the application. Trefor stated that Sonning Parish Council strongly objected to this application, as whilst residents were pleased to accommodate the school within the Parish, there was concern relating to issues including the traffic associated with the school. Previous planning applications had restricted pupil numbers to 750, and later to 825. The reasons for these restrictions were mainly due to highway safety and to congestion. Trefor stated that an enrolment of the proposed 1100 pupils compared to the 785 currently on roll would represent a forty percent increase, subsequently leading to a forty percent increase in traffic, congestion, and pollution. Trefor added that at school arrival and departure time, the section of Sonning Lane adjacent to the school entrance became gridlocked. Trefor added that local residents and commuters would avoid this area and take other routes due to this congestion. Trefor stated that the traffic survey accompanying the application focussed on the junctions of Sonning Lane and the A4, showing thirty-eight percent of school traffic went via this junction. Trefor added that the survey therefore failed to recognise that sixty-two percent of traffic travelled via the Pearson Road in Sonning, which was a narrow road with parking along its length. Trefor was of the opinion that the suggestion that a forty percent increase in school traffic was nonsensical. Trefor added that the increase in pupil numbers would place additional pressures on existing infrastructure, including the drainage and sewage systems, whereby the drains within the school site already experienced blockages with current pupil numbers. Trefor stated that approval of this application was subject for approval to a separate application for an extension of the car park at Berkshire County Sports Club. Sonning Parish Council had also objected to this application, on the grounds that it involved the loss of another area of green space, when other pre-existing tarmacked areas could be used instead. Trefor stated that the site of the school west of Sonning Lane was adjacent to Holme Park Farm, which had recently been added to consideration for the Local Plan Update. Trefor was of the opinion that for both this application for the school expansion in conjunction with any future application for housing at Holme Farm would be a disaster for the Village of Sonning. Trefor concluded by stating that consultation was a two way process, and it was not currently happening for this and other applications.

Christopher Wickham, agent, spoke in support of the application. Christopher stated that there was a strong demand for school places in the area, and co-educational provision. Christopher stated that the school had engaged proactively with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), and cited national policy guidance which placed great weight on the need to expand schools. The application had been subject to rigorous assessment by WBC highways officers, and the school believed that the issues of highways impact, car parking capacity, and sustainable travel measures were fully supportable. Christopher stated that traffic surveys had shown that the additional traffic generated by the proposals in the AM peak hour, both coming north through Sonning village and south via the A4 junction was within entirely acceptable limits. This was in part due to the staggered starts of staff and pupils, in addition to the success of the managed drop off facilities that the school had provided on site. Christopher stated that during the 8.15AM to 8.30AM peak would amount in the worst case to one additional vehicle via Sonning Lane to the north. Christopher added that the historic issue of car parking along Sonning Lane had been addressed via the implementation of double yellow line restrictions and by the drop off lane which the school had constructed. Christopher stated that the detailed analysis within the report showed that the overall proposed level of off street parking would meet the Council's parking standards, whilst other proposed conditions would cover parking management and the provision of cycle parking. The school had an established travel plan which was regularly updated, and the school also used a network of privately managed bus networks,

which was due to be expanded further, whilst parking and turning of these bus services was provided off of the highway. Christopher concluded by stating that cycle parking and electric vehicle charging points were also proposed, and requested that the Committee approve the application.

Michael Firmager, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. Michael stated that he was not in any way against the increase in education opportunities, as these should be the right of everyone if they so wished. Michael was of the opinion that this application would have a considerable on the traffic and pollution levels in Sonning, and in particular along the Sonning Lane and Pearson Road. Michael added that these roads were especially congested with parked cars, and as a result they were extremely tight for vehicles to navigate around. Michael stated that there had been a steady increase in pupil numbers over the years, and noted that even with car sharing and bus travel methods, the increase in pupils would lead to a large number of additional vehicles using the already congested roads in and around Sonning. Michael stated that the extension of car parking at the Berkshire County Sports Club was not in and of itself a bad idea, however it would still lead to more vehicle movements in and around Sonning's roads. Michael reiterated his view that this application would increase congestion and pollution in surrounding area, whilst also increasing the risk of accidents within the surrounding area.

Angus Ross queried why only some schools had a limit on total pupil numbers, queried what tests had been carried out to evidence that the proposals were acceptable in terms of congestion and pollution, and queried what guarantees were there that the Berkshire County Sports car park would allow parking for the school beyond their current long term lease. Simon Taylor, case officer, stated that capping pupil numbers by condition was a recent trend. Relating to the car parking, Simon stated that the lease agreement was in place until 2040, and condition 18 tried to tie the lease to this application. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that the modal split data came from the school travel plan, which provided detailed data. A survey had been carried out at the junction, and showed that the worst case scenario was the queue increasing from one vehicle to four vehicles, which was not a high level nor at capacity. Any increase of queueing in this manner would be temporary and limited by the nature of the peak school drop-off and pickup time periods.

Angus Ross commented that only thirty-eight percent of the traffic was shown to use the A4 junction, with the rest of the traffic travelling via Pearson Road. Angus sought clarification regarding the traffic which was not using the A4 junction. Judy Kelly stated that the traffic was split in three directions, with the flow of vehicles using the Sonning Lane junction shown to be the highest of the three different directions of travel. When assessing the performance of a junction, officers looked at the direction of most vehicle flow as that was the junction which was most likely to struggle. Having been assessed, the A4 junction had shown a maximum additional queue of three vehicles in the AM peak drop off time, which was considered acceptable.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried why the percentage increase of pupils had been carried out from the current maximum number of pupils being 850 rather than the number of pupils currently on roll, queried whether it was possible for to guarantee use of the Berkshire County Sports Club in perpetuity, and commented that the issue of congestion was not just due to the number of additional vehicles but also the nature of the roads. Simon stated that the thirty-three percent increase in pupil numbers was based on the existing approval, and was not a traffic based assessment. Simon stated that the use of the car park could not be changed, and if it were to change it would be anticipated that an alternative arrangement

would come forward prior to any change occurring. Simon added that the dual-use nature of the car park was a positive for outcome for the Sports Club. In relation to the nature of the roads, Judy Kelly stated that the Highways officer would have carried out a site visit at the school peak hour in order to identify any potential issues. There were very strict rules in relation to the input of geometric dimensions of the road and junction within the software used, and needed to include the visibility splays from all directions. Judy added that the additional vehicles using the road would be cars and not oversized vehicles.

Bill Soane sought assurances that the completion of the car park was a prerequisite to increase of the maximum pupil numbers. Bill commented that he had great concerns in relation to the safety of Sonning Lane and the A4, which included a very dangerous right turn off of the junction in his opinion. Bill added that any form of traffic control would be of benefit to the area, and commented that he had attended a large funeral locally recently which had caused the village area to become gridlocked. Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management, confirmed that condition 13 required completion of the planning application for extension of the car parking area prior to the school increasing their maximum pupil numbers.

Stephen Conway commented that he had personal experience with this section of road at the school drop-off time, and added that there was also a nursery next to the school. Stephen was of the opinion that this application would add to the congestion issues on the road, but added that Members had to be guided by the technical recommendation which was based off of data.

Pauline Jorgensen noted that there was a low number of pupils cycling to the school, and queried whether officers had engaged with the school to understand what the barriers were to children cycling to and from school. Judy Kelly stated that the school had a travel plan which was due to be updated in six months' time, and part of this process involved consulting with the school and wider community to understand what barriers to cycling were present.

Pauline Jorgensen proposed an additional informative, encouraging the school to work with the Local Authority to increase the amount of cycling to and from the school. This proposal was seconded by Chris Bowring, carried, and added to the list of informatives.

RESOLVED That application number 210693 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 172 to 177, reference to the correct planning application number of 210693 as contained within the Supplementary planning Agenda, and additional informative encouraging the school to work with the Local Authority to increase the amount of cycling to and from the school as resolved by the Committee.

30. APPLICATION NO.211754 - 25 CAMELLIA WAY, WOKINGHAM

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item and therefore left the room and took no part in either the discussion or vote.

Applicant: Dr Robert Koefman

Proposal: Full application for the proposed change of use of the site from residential (Use Class C3) to a mixed use of residential and a beauty salon (Use Class Sui Generis) (Retrospective).

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 201 to 216.

The Committee were advised that there were no updates within the Supplementary Planning Agenda.

John Walsh, neighbour, spoke in objection to the application. John stated that he had been subject to a campaign of harassment from the business owner and neighbours. John added that his wife had been subject to several verbal onslaughts on her own doorstep. John stated that there were only three formal parking bays at number 25, as the modified garage was too small to accommodate any vehicle. John added that he had submitted photographs, land registry maps, title deeds, and a solicitor's letter confirming that that he had driveway ownership and intended use. John added that after considering the vehicles owned by number 25, there were no formal bays left for use by either the intended clients or business owner. John stated that prior to the business operating, the closest public viewpoint into his property was 25m away at the end of the driveway, and the closest pedestrian walkway route was closer to 40m away. John was of the opinion that there was therefore a significant reduction in privacy, as the nearest window of his property to the business entrance was only 3m distance, and his family's privacy was particularly important to them during the evening and weekends when the children were at home and adults were not working. John was of the opinion that the business operator had not been adhering to any planning rules, whilst operating outside of the proposed hours and client volume contained within the planning application, whilst the published opening hours on social media did not align with those on the application. John asked the Committee to consider how the operating conditions would be enforced by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), should this application be approved. John stated that whilst his preference was for the business to relocate somewhere more suitable, he hoped that the Committee could at least consider additional conditions, including restricting opening hours to 9-5 on weekdays and excluding all weekends and bank holidays, use of an alternative business entrance point such as the property front door or rear gate, and finally asked that the driveway forecourt was not used by the business operator or client parking during the agreed business hours.

Matthew Miller, agent, spoke in support of the application. Matthew stated that this was a retrospective application as the applicant had not realised that permission was required, and had applied for permission as soon as they were advised to do so. Matthew stated that the business operated on an appointment only basis with a maximum of four clients per day within strictly enforced hours of operation. Matthew added that this application would meet WBC's parking standards, and commented that the neighbouring property at number 23 did not have sole right of access. Matthew commented that the planning authority had to take into account any fall-back position that could be adopted, which in this case would be that a similar business could be lawfully operated without the need for planning permission by the owners of number 25 rather than the daughter who did not reside at the address. Matthew concluded by stating that the application confirmed with both local and national planning policy as a whole, as was a fully sustainable development which also brought about a degree of economic benefit. Matthew asked that the Committee approve this application.

Imogen Shepherd DuBey, Ward Member, commented on the application. Imogen stated that Councillor Rachel Bishop-Firth had listed this application to the Committee due to concerns relating to potential noise and disturbances to residents in the area including neighbouring properties. Imogen stated that she was not against this type of business,

however ground rules needed to be in place to ensure that businesses did not cause any problems for neighbours or local residents. Imogen asked the Committee to listen to both the applicant and local residents, and agree a framework whereby all parties could understand and live with.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether the safety of children in relation to additional vehicle movements had been considered, queried officers view on the entrance for the business coming off of the public footpath along Bob's Copse, queried what test was applied to determine that the business use was incidental to the residential use of the main dwelling, and queried whether a condition to exclude all weekend and bank holiday trading was reasonable. Senjuti Manna, case officer, stated that officers had visited the site and felt that the front garden was small and not really large enough for children to play in. Senjuti added that use of the footpath for access would change the nature of the application. Relating to ancillary use, Senjuti stated that planning permission would not be required if the business operator lived at the address, and officers felt that the overall use of the business was ancillary to the residential nature of the dwelling. Senjuti stated that condition 3 stated that the business could not operate on Sundays or bank holidays, and permission to operate between 10AM and 4PM on a Saturday was considered reasonable.

Stephen Conway stated that operation of the business on Saturdays could have an effect on residential amenity, however not allowing it could be of detriment to the business. Stephen queried whether it was reasonable to allow use of the business between the prescribed hours of 10AM and 4PM on Saturdays. Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management, stated that only four appointments were allowed on a Saturday, with a thirty minute gap between appointments, and as such officers had deemed this acceptable.

Stephen Conway commented that residents could contact the WBC enforcement team if they had any concerns relating to breach of conditions in the future.

RESOLVED That application number 211754 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 202 to 203.

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