

# Agenda Item 35.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
211772	EXT		Winnersh;

<b>Applicant</b>	Reds 10 (on behalf of the Department for Education)
<b>Site Address</b>	Land at Winnersh Farm, Woodward Close, Wokingham
<b>Proposal</b>	Full application for the construction of a new 150 place Special Educational Needs school with associated access, parking and landscaping.
<b>Type</b>	Full
<b>Officer</b>	Sophie Morris
<b>Reason for determination by committee</b>	Major application

<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 8 September 2021
<b>REPORT PREPARED BY</b>	Assistant Director – Place

SUMMARY
<p>The application site relates to land located off Woodward Close in Winnersh, which forms part of an area of agricultural land known as 'Winnersh Farm'. The parish of Winnersh is located approximately 5km to the north-west of Wokingham town centre and about 1km from Winnersh rail station. The site is located outside of the Winnersh settlement boundary, is not currently an allocated site and as such it is located within the countryside.</p> <p>The proposals seek full planning permission for the construction of a new 150 place Special Educational Needs (SEN) School which would be accessed via a newly proposed access road off Woodward Close.</p> <p>In terms of the principle of the development, the NPPF is clear that where a development does not result in significant harm and is sustainable, it should be supported. The borough has a pressing and established need for a Special Educational Needs (SEN) school to serve both Wokingham and also Reading borough, which is set out in detail within Executive reports of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019 and 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020. The Council has a statutory duty to provide appropriate education for children with special educational needs. These reports clearly demonstrate a requirement for a SEN provision to meet these statutory needs, both in terms of insufficient existing local capacity and the associated costs with facilitating out of borough provision. They further demonstrate that the need for SEN spaces is continuing to rise. Having regards to the exceptions criteria of adopted Policy CP11 it is considered that in this instance, the proposals demonstrate that exception criteria (6) would be met. It should be noted also that finding a suitable location for a new school, especially a SEN school is challenging and this location is considered to offer the most appropriate site available within the borough. The principal of the development is therefore considered to be supported by the current adopted local plan Policy CP11.</p> <p>Officers consider that the overall proposed layout, design, scale and external appearance of the building would be appropriate to its intended use, whilst respecting the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Existing trees and hedgerows are sought to be retained where possible, and where tree removals are proposed, the</p>

proposed landscaping scheme will provide suitable mitigation. It should be noted that the two most significant large oak trees on the site will be retained. Through the adoption of energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies in the design of the building, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are proposed to be reduced in excess of current policy requirements and in line with national standards for new schools.

The site is also considered to be located in a sustainable location whereby bus and rail services are within walking distance to the site, as mentioned the site is about 1km from the Winnersh station and good bus services are located on Reading Road. The application given its scale, would also not result in harmful impacts to the highway network. The development proposals are therefore considered to be sustainable, and would offer significant public benefit to help meet an identified need for an SEN school provision in the area. It would also not result in significant impacts upon existing neighbouring amenities.

There are no other material planning considerations of significant weight that would dictate that the application should be refused in line with the NPPF. Officers are therefore recommending the application for approval, subject to the conditions listed.

#### **PLANNING STATUS**

- Countryside
- Groundwater protection zone
- GC Newt Consultation Zone
- Landscape Character Assessment
- Ordinary Watercourse Consultation Zone
- Tree Preservation Orders
- Minerals Site Consultation Area
- Contaminated land consultation zone

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

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

*Conditions:*

**1. Commencement**

The development of 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 Act 2004).*

**2. Approved Details**

This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings outlined below. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

*List of drawings to be approved will be provided as part of the members update*

*Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.*

### **3. Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)**

Prior to commencement of development hereby permitted, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Construction of the development shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved CEMP. The CEMP shall include the following matters:

- i) a construction travel protocol or Green Travel Plan for the construction phase including details of parking and turning for vehicles of site personnel, operatives and visitors;
- ii) loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- iii) storage of plant and materials;
- iv) programme of works, including measures for traffic management and operating hours (including details relating to the avoidance of HGV arriving/departing from the site during drop off-pick up hours of the adjacent school);
- v) piling techniques;
- vi) provision of boundary hoarding and lighting;
- vii) protection of important trees, hedgerows and other natural features;
- viii) relevant ecological mitigation measures for protected species (bats, birds, reptiles)
- ix) Invasive non-native species strategy
- x) Control of rats and other vermin particularly during site clearance
- xi) protection of the aquatic environment in terms of water quantity and quality;
- xii) details of proposed means of dust suppression and noise mitigation;
- xiii) details of measures to prevent mud from vehicles leaving the site during construction;
- xiv) details of any site construction office, compound and ancillary facility buildings. These facilities shall be sited away from woodland areas;
- xv) lighting on site during construction;
- xvi) measures to ensure no on-site fires during construction;
- xvii) monitoring and review mechanisms;
- xviii) implementation of the CEMP through an environmental management system;
- xix) details of the haul routes to be used to access the development;
- xx) details of temporary surface water management measures to be provided during the construction phase;
- xxi) details of the excavation of materials and the sub-surface construction methodology; and
- xxii) appointment of a Construction Liaison Officer

*Reason: To protect occupants of nearby dwellings from noise and disturbance during the construction period, in the interest of highway safety and convenience and to minimise the environmental impact of the construction phase in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3, CP6 and CP7 and TB23 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy, and ODPM circular 2006/05.*

#### **4. Hours of operation**

No work relating to the development hereby approved, including works of ground clearance or preparation prior to commencement of construction operations shall take place other than between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 hours Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 hours on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank or National Holidays unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Council.

*Reason: To protect the occupiers of neighbouring properties from noise and disturbance outside the permitted hours during the construction period. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.*

#### **5. Allotment access**

Prior to restricting the existing access to the Winnersh allotments, details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to demonstrate how access to the allotments will be made continually available for the duration of the construction period. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

*Reason: to ensure comprehensive planning of the site to ensure the timely delivery of facilities and services and to protect the amenity of the area in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP2, CP3.*

#### **6. Samples of Materials**

Prior to commencement of development above finished floor level, samples and details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building/s shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the so-approved details.

*Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3*

#### **7. Levels**

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

*Reason: In order to ensure a satisfactory form of development relative to surrounding buildings and landscape. Relevant policy: NPPF and Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Deliver Local Plan Policy TB21.*

#### **8. Lighting**

Details of external lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before the development is occupied. The details shall include location, height, type and direction of light sources and intensity of illumination for all external lighting strategies including details of lighting for all highways, cycleways, footpaths and public areas.

The lighting details submitted shall include a “lighting design strategy for biodiversity” for light sensitive species and shall:

- a) Identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their resting places or along important routes used to access key area of their territory, for example for foraging; and
- b) Show how and where external lighting will be installed so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and maintained thereafter. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.

*Reason: To ensure that roads and footpaths are constructed to a standard that would be suitable for adoption as publicly maintainable highway, in the interests of providing a functional, accessible, safe and high-quality development and to maintain favourable conservation status of the site for protected species and species of principal importance. Relevant policies: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3, CP6, CP7 and TB23.*

#### **9. Highway Construction details**

Prior to the commencement of development, full details of the construction of roads, cycleways, footways and access to the allotments, including levels, widths, construction materials, depths of construction, surface water drainage and lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall not be occupied until the vehicle access to the school has been constructed in accordance with the approved details to road base level and the final wearing course will be provided within 3 months of first use, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

*Reason: To ensure that roads and footpaths are constructed to a standard that would be suitable for adoption as publicly maintainable highway, in the interests of providing a functional, accessible and safe development. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.*

#### **10. Details of boundary walls and fences**

Prior to commencement of development above finished floor level, details of all boundary treatment(s) including details of gates and height barriers shall first be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior occupation of the development. The scheme shall be maintained in the approved form for so long as the development remains on the site unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Council.

*Reason: In the interests of amenity and highway safety. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6*

## **11. Landscaping**

Prior to the commencement of the development, full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include, as appropriate, proposed finished floor levels or contours, means of enclosure, car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas, hard surfacing materials and minor artefacts and structure (e.g. furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting, external services, etc.)

Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable.

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

*Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to maintain favourable conservation status of the site for protected species and species of principal importance. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3, CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03, TB21 & TB23*

## **12. Landscape Management Plan**

Prior to the commencement of the development, a landscape management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities, timescales and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved.

*Reason: In order to ensure that provision is made to allow satisfactory maintenance of the landscaping hereby approved. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.*

## **13. Retention of trees and shrubs**

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

*Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that development is being carried out, of trees, shrubs and hedges growing within the site which are of amenity*

*value to the area. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21*

#### **14. Protection of trees**

- a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until a scheme which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority (the Approved Scheme); the tree protection measures approved shall be implemented in complete accordance with the Approved Scheme for the duration of the development (including, unless otherwise provided by the Approved Scheme) demolition, all site preparation work, tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery.
- b) No development (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) shall commence until the local planning authority has been provided (by way of a written notice) with a period of no less than 7 working days to inspect the implementation of the measures identified in the Approved Scheme on-site.
- c) No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the Approved Scheme.
- d) The fencing or other works which are part of the Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval 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.*

#### **15. Aged and Veteran Tree Strategy**

Prior to commencement of the development, a detailed veteran and aged tree mitigation strategy shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Council. The strategy shall include details of all the tree works that are required to maintain the trees ecological value. The management plans should cover a period of 10 years from the commencement of development. The mitigation strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plan unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority

*Reason: To secure the suitable protection of aged and veteran trees 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.*

**16.** No works affecting Tree T40 shall commence until a licence for development works affecting bats has been obtained from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (Natural England) and a copy has been submitted to the local planning authority. Thereafter mitigation measures approved in the licence shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details. Should conditions at the site for bats change and / or the applicant conclude that a licence for development works affecting bats is not required, the applicant is to submit a report to the council detailing the reasons for this assessment and this report is to be approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to commencement of works.

*Reason: To ensure that the proposal is in accordance with Section 41 NERC Act re. UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species (Species of Principal Importance), and complies with Planning Policies for Wildlife including CP7 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010), and the National Planning Policy Framework which requires consideration of the potential biodiversity gains that can be secured within developments*

**17. Reptile Mitigation Strategy**

Prior to the commencement of development, an updated reptile mitigation strategy shall be submitted to the local authority for its approval. The strategy shall include details of a translocation closing off report to be submitted to the LPA, together with the long-term management and maintenance responsibilities for the proposed receptor site.

*Reason: To ensure that the proposal is in accordance with Section 41 NERC Act re. UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species (Species of Principal Importance), and complies with Planning Policies for Wildlife including CP7 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010), and the National Planning Policy Framework which requires consideration of the potential biodiversity gains that can be secured within developments.*

**18. Biodiversity Enhancement (Species)**

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in line with the enhancement measures detailed within submitted soft landscaping plans 2093-MAC-XX-XX-DR-L-00011 to 00014 Rev P4.

*Reason: To ensure that the proposal is in accordance with Section 41 NERC Act re. UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species (Species of Principal Importance), and complies with Planning Policies for Wildlife including CP7 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010), and the National Planning Policy Framework which requires consideration of the potential biodiversity gains that can be secured within developments.*

**19. Biodiversity Enhancement (Habitats)**

No development shall commence until a scheme for the offsetting of biodiversity impacts at the site has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The offsetting scheme shall include:

- Details of the offset requirements of the development (in accordance with the recognised offsetting Defra metric 2.0); and



- The provision of arrangements (including any financial contributions) to secure the delivery of the offsetting measures;
- The written approval of the LPA shall not be issued before the arrangements necessary to secure the delivery of the off-setting measures have been executed.

*Reason: to ensure the proposal accords with paras 174 and 180 of the NPPF.*

## **20. Community Use**

Prior to occupation of the development hereby approved, details of the proposed community use of the school hall and external pitch facilities shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include arrangements for hours of use and management responsibilities. The development shall not be used at any time other than in compliance with the approved agreement.

*Reason: To secure well managed community facilities, and to protect the amenity of the area and to ensure that the development is not unneighbourly in accordance with Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP2, CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.*

## **21. School Travel Plan**

Within 6 months of the commencement of the school, an updated Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The travel plan shall include a programme of implementation and proposals to promote alternative forms of transport to and from the site, other than by private car and provide for periodic review (every 12 months). The travel plan shall be permanently implemented as agreed.

*Reason: To ensure the provision of sustainable transport measures in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP6 and CP21.*

## **22. Parking (as approved)**

No part of any building(s) hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until the vehicle parking spaces have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The vehicle parking spaces shall be permanently maintained and remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.

*Reason: To ensure adequate on-site parking provision in the interests of highway safety, convenience and amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

## **23. Parking Management Strategy**

Prior to the first occupation of the site, a Parking Management Strategy for the management and monitoring of the on-site parking as well as the management of the drop-off and pick-up area shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submitted Parking Management Strategy shall include details to ensure that deliveries and servicing to the site do not take place in the car park during school drop off or pick up times. The management of the parking within the site shall be in accordance with the approved details thereafter.

*Reason: to ensure satisfactory development in the interests of amenity and highway safety in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP6 and CP21.*

#### **24. Cycle and Scooter Parking**

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

*Reason: In order to ensure that secure weather-proof parking facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

#### **25. Electric Vehicle Charging**

Prior to the first occupation of the site, details of the proposed Electric Vehicle Charging points serving the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Electric Vehicle Charging points shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved before occupation of the development hereby permitted, and shall be permanently retained in the approved form for the charging of electric vehicles and used for no other purpose.

*Reason: In order to ensure that secure electric vehicle charging facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

#### **Energy and Sustainability**

**26.** The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the energy efficiency and renewable energy measures as set out within the submitted Delap & Waller Oak Tree Special Educational Needs School Sustainability and Energy statement dated 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021 ref: 21/029; unless otherwise approved in writing by the LPA. The identified measures shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the buildings.

*Reason: In order to ensure the development contributes towards the goal of achieving zero carbon development by including on-site renewable energy features and minimising energy and water consumption. Relevant Policy: Core Strategy Policy CP1, MDDL P policies CC04 and CC05; Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (May 2010).*

#### **Refuse and recycling**

**27.** The internal and external spaces for the storage of refuse and recyclable materials for the development hereby approved shall be provided prior to occupation.

*Reason: To ensure that adequate provision is made for the storage of recyclables in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policy CP1 and CC04 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (Feb 2014), the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document and the North Wokingham Strategic Development Location Supplementary Planning Document (October 2011).*

## **28. Flood Risk and Drainage**

The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted 'Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy' produced by Design ID (document reference 2093-DID-XX-XX-RP-C-1010 Rev P04 dated 23.08.2021).

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

## **29. Contamination**

(a) If contamination is found at any time during site clearance, groundwork and construction, the discovery shall be reported as soon as possible to the local planning authority. A full contamination risk assessment shall be carried out and if found to be necessary, a 'remediation method statement' shall be submitted to the local planning authority for written approval. Should no evidence of contamination be found during the development a statement to that effect shall be submitted to the local planning authority

(b) Works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved 'remediation method statement' (submitted to comply with condition 20) and a final validation report shall be submitted to the local planning authority upon completion of remedial works.

*Reason: To ensure that any contamination of the site is identified at the outset to allow remediation to protect amenity of the site and adjacent land. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 11 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment) and Core Strategy policies CP1 & CP3.*

## **30. Plant noise**

Noise from externally mounted plant and machinery shall not at any time exceed 42dB LAeq,Tr when measured at the boundary of the nearest noise sensitive receptor.

*Reason: to protect residents and users of the school from noise. Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.*

## **31. Archaeological investigation**

No development shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title have secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work (which may comprise more than one phase of works) in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the planning authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme approved pursuant to this condition.

*Reason: The site lies within an area of archaeological potential. Investigation is required to allow preservation and recording of any archaeological features or artefacts before disturbance by the development. Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB25.*

### **32. Employment skills plan**

The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted "Employment and Skills Plan" produced by Reds10 (UK) Ltd Rev 2 dated August 2021.

*Reason: In order to develop local employability skills by securing opportunities for training, apprenticeship or other vocational initiatives in accordance with MDD Policy TB12.*

#### *Informatives:*

- I. The Head of Highways at the Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham [0118 9746000] should be contacted for the approval of the access construction details before any work is carried out within the highway (including verges and footways). This planning permission does NOT authorise the construction of such an access or works.
- II. Adequate precautions shall be taken during the construction period to prevent the deposit of mud and similar debris on adjacent highways. For further information contact the Highway Authority on tel: 0118 9746000.
- III. If it is the developer's intention to request the Council, as local highway authority, to adopt the proposed access roads etc. as highway maintainable at public expense, then full engineering details must be agreed with the Highway Authority at the Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham. The developer is strongly advised not to commence development until such details have been approved in writing and a legal agreement is made with the Council under S38 of the Highways Act 1980.
- IV. Any works/events carried out either by, or at the behest of, the developer, whether they are located on, or affecting a prospectively maintainable highway, as defined under Section 87 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991, or on or affecting the public highway, shall be coordinated under the requirements of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 and the Traffic management Act 2004 and licensed accordingly in order to secure the expeditious movement of traffic by minimising disruption to users of the highway network in Wokingham.
- V. Any such works or events commissioned by the developer and particularly those involving the connection of any utility to the site, shall be co-ordinated by them in liaison with Wokingham Borough Council's Street Works Team, (telephone 01189 746302). This must take place at least three months in advance of the works and particularly to ensure that statutory undertaker connections/supplies to the site are coordinated to take place wherever possible at the same time.
- VI. The attention of the applicant is drawn to the requirements of Section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 in respect of the minimisation of noise on construction

and demolition sites. Application, under Section 61 of the Act, for prior consent to the works, can be made to the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager.

- VII. In respect of surface water it is recommended that the applicant should ensure that storm flows are attenuated or regulated into the receiving public network through on or off site storage. When it is proposed to connect to a combined public sewer, the site drainage should be separate and combined at the final manhole nearest the boundary. Connections are not permitted for the removal of Ground Water. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. They can be contacted on 0845 850 2777.
- VIII. Licences, consents or permits may be required for work on this site. For further information on environmental permits and other licences please visit <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?r.s=tl&r.lc=en&topicId=1079068363>
- IX. The attention of the applicant is drawn to the requirements of Section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 in respect of the minimisation of noise on construction and demolition sites. Application, under Section 61 of the Act, for prior consent to the works, can be made to the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager

<b>PLANNING HISTORY</b>		
<b>Application Number</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Decision</b>
202640	Screening Opinion application for an Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposed SEN school on land at Winnersh Farm.	Not EIA Development

<b>SUMMARY INFORMATION</b>	
Site Area	1.7 ha
Previous land use	Agriculture
Proposed floorspace	3647sq.m
Proposed parking spaces	90

<b>CONSULTATION RESPONSES</b>	
Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust	No comments received
Crime Prevention Design Officer	No objection
National Grid	Linesearch advice regarding listed assets within vicinity of the site
Southern Gas Networks	Standing advice and details provided of SGN owned pipes in the vicinity of the site
SEE Power Distribution	Linesearch advice regarding network records within vicinity of the site
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue	No comments received
Berkshire Archaeology	No objection subject to condition
Thames Water	No objection
South East Water	No comments received
Environment Agency	No objection

WBC Biodiversity	No objection subject to conditions
WBC Economic Prosperity and Place (Community Infrastructure)	No objection subject to condition
WBC Drainage	No objection subject to conditions
WBC Education (School Place Planning)	Support the application
WBC Environmental Health	No objection subject to conditions
WBC Highways	No objection subject to conditions
WBC Tree & Landscape	No objection subject to conditions
WBC Cleaner & Greener (Waste Services)	No comments received
WBC Public Rights of Way	No objection

## REPRESENTATIONS

### Winnersh Parish Council:

- Traffic modelling is required, this is not in the supporting documentation. The Council would like to see that the traffic modelling shows no detrimental impact on the surrounding road network. *Officer comment – traffic modelling has been submitted and traffic impacts of the scheme are considered acceptable – see Highways section of report.*
- Transport assessment page 9 Swept path analysis whilst this is acceptable on a lightly trafficked road, we are concerned about future developments taking place with additional traffic and vehicles having to utilise the opposite side of the carriageway to access the junction. *Officer comment: the proposals have been assessed on the basis of the school development only as this is the scheme in front of officers for consideration. Any other potential development proposals would be assessed on their own merits, taking into consideration this proposal should planning permission be forthcoming.*
- P 17 Transport assessment. The minimum electrical charge points have been included in the plans, at a time when we are actively trying to lower carbon emissions, this should be doubled to 8 active and 8 passive charging points. *Officer comment – WBC Highways have assessed the level of proposed EVC provision and find them to be acceptable.*
- Air Quality the WBC reports that are being used are from 2019 when the SMART motorway was being constructed and the speed limit was 50MPH. The Air Quality Assessment and forecast study should use data from when the motorway is running at full capacity and at 70MPH. If the new link road opens up 100 dwellings, this will have a direct impact on air quality at the school. *Officer comment – the air quality assessment has been reviewed by Environmental Health who consider that the results demonstrate that the school proposal would neither have a harmful impact upon, or be significantly harmed by air quality in the surrounding area. See environmental health section of the report. Any further planning application proposals would need to be assessed on their merits with regards to potential impacts upon the school proposal.*
- Design and access statement This stated on page 14 that there is a root protection zone around tree T44, but elsewhere tree T44 will be felled, the Council would like confirmation on the felling and if it is planned to be felled feel that the car park should be redesigned to save the tree which is a Category B with over 20 years of life, and add any parking bays to the overflow area. *Officer comment – tree T44 is now proposed to be retained as part of the proposal.*
- Allotments urgent discussions are needed with Winnersh Parish Council and the

allotment holders about existing and proposed access, the boundaries and the toilet. *Officer comment: whilst this matter will need to be discussed outside of the application between the applicant and the Parish Council, condition 5 requires details of how access to the existing allotments would be maintained throughout the construction process.*

## **Local Members:**

Comments received from Councillor Paul Fishwick:

### Air Quality

- The Air Quality Screening Assessment is based upon Wokingham Borough Council's June 2020 Annual Report to DEFRA covering the 2019 year. At that time the M4 motorway was still undergoing the construction of the SMART motorway works. Speeds were restricted to 50mph and not the National Speed limit of 70mph. Therefore, much lower pollution levels can be expected.
- Emission levels increase considerably with speed, especially within freeflow conditions where DfT figures show that up 50% of drivers exceed 70mph motorway speed limits. Data using WOK 70 (King Street Lane) and WOK 71 (Longdon Road) would also be a helpful source of preSMART motorway construction data rather than WOK 835 (Robin Hood Lane).
- The forecast emissions appear to have used the 2019 data and therefore will be lower than preSMART motorway conditions.
- In addition, no monitoring of PM10 or PM2.5 is carried out by Wokingham Borough Council therefore the data used has been modelled. The forecast for 2022 indicates 11.10 gm for PM 2.5. This exceeds the World Health Organisations recommended limit of 10 gm.

*Officer comment – the air quality assessment has been reviewed by WBC Environmental Health who consider that the results demonstrate that the school proposal would neither have a harmful impact upon, or be significantly harmed by air quality in the surrounding area. See environmental health section of the report. It should also be noted that the Department for Education have not raised any issues in selecting this site.*

- I also raise concern over the potential development to the rear of the SEN school for up to 100 dwellings. This would have a direct impact on the school if this development went ahead.
- Of further concern is the spur road shown running adjacent to the eastern boundary of the proposed school. It is not clear if this links to the Taylor Wimpey site of Winnersh Farms to the north, where two previous applications by the developer have not proceeded. Use of this link road in anyway connecting to the Taylor Wimpey site would have a significant impact on Air Quality at the SEN school. Therefore, this access road must be removed from any future plans.

*Officer comment: whilst some of the submitted plans indicatively showed an access road beyond the red line boundary, this is not included in the list of plans to be*

*approved. Whilst an outline planning application has been submitted for housing development on the adjacent site (ref: 212404), the school proposals are assessed on the basis of being a stand alone application. The application for adjacent development will be assessed on its own merits, taking into consideration the cumulative impacts with this proposal should planning permission be forthcoming.*

### Tree Protection

- The Design and Access Statement (page 14) indicates that Root protection will be provided to tree T44 as well as T40 and T39. However, in other documents the Common Oak (Category B tree) is shown as being felled. These mature Oak trees currently situated on the side of the existing track leading to the allotments provide excellent features to the existing landscape and T44 should remain and could be by a redesign of the car park removing the car parking bays that impact on this tree and relocating these to the overflow car park.

*Officer comment: for clarification, tree T44 is now proposed to be retained and the car park layout has been amended accordingly.*

### Electric Vehicle Charging point provision

- The Transport Assessment on page 17 indicates that there will be 4 active and 4 passive Electric Vehicle charge points made available in September 2022 for staff in the car park. This is a minimum standard and with a drive towards acceleration of electric vehicle provision these need to at least double to 8 active and 8 passive.

*Officer comment: The EVC provision accords with current WBC standards and Highways raise no objection to the level proposed. The regular review of the Travel Plan may identify additional EVC charging points, which can be provided at a later stage if identified as being required.*

### Swept Path Analysis

- The Transport Assessment (page 9) indicates the Swept Path Analysis would be acceptable on a lightly trafficked road, that leads to the allotments. I agree with this assumption. However, the potential of increasing traffic levels be adding up to 100 dwellings to the east would change this analysis and make it unacceptable.
- If the spur road, shown in the documentation was connect to the Taylor Wimpey site, that would dramatically change the characteristics of this road and the swept path of these vehicles would become a significant road safety issue. This would be another reason to remove this spur road from any future plans.

*Officer comment: whilst some of the submitted plans indicatively showed an access road beyond the red line boundary, this is not included in the list of plans to be approved. Whilst an outline planning application has been submitted for housing development on the adjacent site (ref: 212404), the school proposals are assessed on the basis of being a stand alone application. The application for adjacent*



*development will be assessed on its own merits, taking into consideration the cumulative impacts with this proposal should planning permission be forthcoming.*

### Traffic modelling

- It is disappointing that on page 22 of the Transport Assessment 6.2.1. that the traffic modelling has not been included within this application. In section 6.2.2 it states - A summary of the WSTM run and junction capacity assessment will be submitted as an addendum to this TA for consideration by the Council.
- The forecast 248 vehicle movements during the 08:00-09:00 am peak period is significant (page 25 section 7.1.7) and will impact considerably on the existing Woodward Close junction with the A329 Reading Road where congestion during the am peak already exists and was highlighted by me at the Planning Committee on 10th October 2018 (Planning Application 180760). This documentation must be made available to the public to ensure transparency.

*Officer comment – the TA modelling information was subsequently submitted and Councillors informed of it's availability on the website. Highways officers have reviewed the modelling details and found it to be acceptable.*

### Noise Assessment

- Although there is mention of a noise assessment in some documents there is not a Noise Assessment document within the application. This is of concern as the Noise barriers located along the top of the embankment of the M4 SMART motorway end partway along the frontage of the planned school. The Noise Assessment document needs to be part of this application.

*Officer comment – noise assessment and acoustic reports were submitted with the application and available to view online. Environmental health section of the report refers. It should also be noted that the Department for Education have not raised any issues in selecting this site.*

- The new junction of the access road with Woodward Close must require a junction layout compliant with Local Transport Note 120. Woodward Close offroad shared cycle route is an important key route for walking and cycling.

*Officer comment – The junction has been assessed by Highways officers and will be required to be compliant with LTN 120 as part of the detailed design.*

### **Comments received from Councillor Prue Bray**

- While I support the application, I do have some concerns about the following issues. Noise is a critical factor, particularly motorway noise. I believe a noise assessment has been done. But it does not appear in the list of documents. The council can not really evaluate the suitability of the site for a SEND school without a noise assessment. I note that there was no requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment for this scheme, which would have covered noise. It must surely be covered now.

*Officer comment – noise assessment and acoustic reports were submitted with the application and are available to view online. Environmental health section of the report refers.*

- I agree with the comments about air quality and the other issues that appear in Paul Fishwick's comments, including what he says about the spur road, and the potential impact of other planned development on the school. The overflow car park could be extended without any adverse impact on Neighbouring activities. While the morning arrival presents a concentrated number of trips, vehicles bringing pupils do not normally need to park. However, for the afternoon peak, vehicles collecting pupils do need to park, as they will be arriving in advance of the end of the school day. Even with staggered end times, it seems likely to me that there will be too many vehicles for the proposed parking to be sufficient. Some cars may be collecting more than one pupil, and thus be waiting across end times.

*Officer note – this is noted, and as such, condition 23 requires details of how this would be managed through the parking management plan.*

- The traffic modelling has not been included. Winnersh councillors have been asking for this modelling for well over a year, and it has been promised but never delivered. The junction of Woodward Close with Reading Road is currently being remodelled as part of the Winnersh Relief Road Part 2. We do not believe that the modelling for that junction includes the school traffic. We want to be confident that the junction can cope with what is proposed, and to see what the impact of the extra school traffic will be.

*Officer comment – the TA modelling information was subsequently submitted and Councillors informed of its availability on the website. Highways officers have reviewed the modelling details and advise that it is acceptable.*

- I note that the school has sprinklers, and that the ventilation reports show that the mechanical ventilation will be sufficient to maintain comfortable conditions in all parts of the school at all times.

**Neighbours:** Consultation letters were sent to over 400 surrounding neighbouring properties. Four responses have been received, and a summary of the responses is as follows:-

- The land in question is outside the Settlement Boundary for Winnersh and is currently designated as Separation of Settlements in the current Local Plan. The development should not be considered until a new Local Plan has been formally examined in public and adopted.  
*Officer comment – the principle of development is considered to meet the exceptions criteria 6 of adopted Policy CP11. 'Principle of Development' paras of the below report refer.*
- Traffic modelling has not been included with the application. To base such modelling on just the traffic associated with this school would be disingenuous; it should include all the traffic associated with the 100s of houses which the Council plans to tailgate onto this application and in particular should include a detailed study of the junction between Woodward Close and Reading Road.  
The traffic on Woodward close is already not capable of the current school and

residential traffic and will not support the additional journeys of another school.  
*Officer comment – the TA modelling information was subsequently submitted. Highways officers have reviewed the modelling details and are satisfied that the proposals could be acceptably accommodated within the existing highway network.*

- Parking provision at the school is inadequate. It does not comply with the minimum standards contained in the Council's own Design Guide. Parking at the end of the school day is a particular (and well known) problem and is not sufficiently catered for in this design. As with the current school this will force vehicles to park on Woodward close which is dangerous and a nuisance to residents.

*Officer comment – parking provision is considered acceptable when taking into consideration the predicted staff travel patterns combined with the implementation of the Travel Plan and the parking management plan required by conditions 21 & 23.*

- Noise has not been considered. There is no noise survey included with the Application. The M4 Motorway noise barrier does not extend the full length of this proposed development and consequent noise levels are consistently in Category D as described in PPG24.

*Officer comment – a noise assessment and acoustic report were submitted with the application. The details submitted confirm that the proposals have been designed to meet with the requirements of BB104 regarding the internal ambient noise levels within schools. These requirements fall within Building Control regulations.*

- The proximity to the M4 (now 8 lanes) and the Northern Distributor Road results in poor air quality making the site unsuitable. Ventilation plans are inadequate. Many of the classrooms face due south meaning that solar gain will cause oppressive conditions in those rooms. External shutters should be provided on south facing rooms and full aircon should be considered. HEPA filters should be provided for all ventilation.

*Officer comment – considerations relating to ventilation requirements fall within the remit of Building Control regulations*

- The Air Quality assessment has not been carried out using the current M4 Layout and was taken during the Smart motorway building where speeds were reduced to 50mph and one less lane which just so happens to be the closest to the land in question.

*Officer comment – WBC Environmental Health has reviewed the air quality assessment and considers the proposals to be acceptable with regards to impacts upon the proposed development. See environmental health section of the report.*

- It increases vehicle traffic along a road already restricted by a narrow bridge, residential and other development exiting on to a recently revised and restricted access to a principle road now forming part of a distributor network between Reading and Wokingham boroughs.

*Officer comment – Junction modelling has been undertaken and the junction of Woodward Close and Reading Road will operate under capacity.*

- If the development proceeds the proposed access road to the site continues as an access to allotments. This access appears to be built to the same standards as an estate road and will encourage casual parking as well as causing confusion and a hazard to users as it terminates at a locked gate with no provision for turning. Designing this access with priority over any joining traffic (inappropriate at this stage of development as the land is not currently designated for a change of use in any adopted plan) is also highly questionable.

*Officer comment – Officers agree that the surface of the onwards section of the access road does not need to be to the same standard as the surface of the access*

*road to the school and details relating to the proposed surfacing will be required through proposed condition 9.*

- The plan proposes additional car parking opposite the main school site. If necessary, and presuming that any development proceeds, this area could be extended to accommodate further staff vehicles and the car park adjacent to the building be used for visitors and pupil families only. This would avoid the need to fell the second category A common oak tree, a significant visual feature and biodiversity resource.
- The three substantial mature trees of Common Oak (*Quercus robur*) recorded as Category B2 T39, T40, T45 on the tree survey should be retained and not felled. The school car parking and access road could easily be adjusted to the east of the boundary and in the overflow car park to the south of the access road.  
*Officer comment – Tree T45 is not proposed for removal; the proposals have sought to retain existing trees where possible within the site and an amended layout submitted now retains additional trees, including a mature Oak tree T44 which was initially proposed to be removed. Subject to appropriate mitigation tree planting, the proposals are considered acceptable in this respect.*

<b>PLANNING POLICY</b>		
National Policy	<b>NPPF</b>	National Planning Policy Framework
Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010	<b>CP1</b>	Sustainable Development
	<b>CP2</b>	Inclusive Communities
	<b>CP3</b>	General Principles for Development
	<b>CP6</b>	Managing Travel Demand
	<b>CP7</b>	Biodiversity
	<b>CP9</b>	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
	<b>CP11</b>	Proposals outside development limits (including countryside)
Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	<b>CP15</b>	Employment Development
	<b>CC01</b>	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	<b>CC02</b>	Development Limits
	<b>CC03</b>	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	<b>CC04</b>	Sustainable Design and Construction
	<b>CC05</b>	Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks
	<b>CC06</b>	Noise
	<b>CC07</b>	Parking
	<b>CC08</b>	Safeguarding alignments of the Strategic Transport Network & Road Infrastructure
	<b>CC09</b>	Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)
<b>CC10</b>	Sustainable Drainage	

	<b>TB12</b>	Employment Skills Plan
	<b>TB21</b>	Landscape Character
	<b>TB23</b>	Biodiversity and Development
	<b>TB24</b>	Designated Heritage Assets
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	<b>BDG</b>	Borough Design Guide – Section 4

<b>PLANNING ISSUES</b>
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Application Site and Surroundings

1. The application site relates to land located off Woodward Close in Winnersh, which currently comprises open grassland and forms part of an area of agricultural land known as ‘Winnersh Farm’. The parish of Winnersh is located approximately 5km to the north-west of Wokingham town centre. The site is located outside of the Winnersh settlement boundary within the countryside, and is not currently an allocated site. Winnersh station is about 1 km to the west.
2. To the west of the site boundary are the playing fields and school building of Wheatfield Primary School. The immediate surroundings to the north, and east of the site comprise agricultural land that separates the suburban expansion of Winnersh with the north western edges of Wokingham, although this is visually and physically restricted by the M4 motorway.
3. To the south of the site is the Royal British Legion club and the Winnersh allotments, and beyond this, the M4 and its associated junction with the A329(m), which is on embankment. The allotments are currently accessed via a tree-lined track located off Woodward Close, part of which runs across the application site. The north downs (Wokingham / Reading) railway line is located a short distance from the proposed site access located at the southern end of the site and beyond this is the A329 Reading Road.

Description of Development:

4. The proposals seek full planning permission for the construction of a new 150 place Special Educational Needs (SEN) School with associated access, parking and landscaping. The site would be accessed via a newly proposed access off Woodward Close.
5. The proposed school would be a co-educational non-faith, Autism Spectrum Disorder school for pupils aged 5-18, for Key Stages 1 to 4 (KS1-4) and sixth form, for up to 150 pupils. The proposal has come forward as a result of an identified need for schooling provision of this nature for both Wokingham and Reading borough pupil (further detail on this provided below in the report) however, it would serve pupils from both of these catchment areas. The school operator would be the Maiden Erlegh Trust and it is proposed that the school would open in September 2022.

Principle of Development:

6. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD) Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for

Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7. Policy CC02 of the MDD sets out the development limits for each settlement as defined on the policies map and therefore replaces the proposals map adopted through the Core Strategy, as per the requirement of policy CP9. Policy CP9 sets out that development proposals located within development limits will be acceptable in principle, having regard to the service provisions associated with the major, modest and limited categories.
8. The application site comprises a greenfield site located between residential development to the west and elevated motorway junction to the east. The site is located close to, but outside of, the Major Development Location of Winnersh as defined by Core Strategy policy CP9 and updated by Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD) policy CC02.
9. The application site comprises part of a larger area of land that Policy H2 of the Draft Local Plan proposes to allocate for around 250 dwellings, referred to as 'Winnersh Farms'. The application site was promoted into the Local Plan Update process for residential, school and leisure uses. However, the LPU is still in early stages of preparation and at the time of writing has limited weight in the decision making process. In summary, the planning status of the site at present remains unallocated and the site is therefore located in the countryside in policy terms and Core Strategy policy CP11 therefore applies.
10. In accordance with CP11, development proposals will not normally be permitted except where one or more of the specified exceptions apply. Of relevance to this application is Criterion 6) which allows for development in the countryside where "*Essential community facilities cannot be accommodated within development limits or through the re-use/replacement of an existing building*".
11. For the first part of the criterion, consideration needs to be given to whether the proposed development is a 'community facility' and, if so, whether it is considered 'essential'. Core Strategy Paragraph 4.17 states: "*Community facilities include development for health (including preventative social care and community support services), **education**, play and leisure or culture together with libraries, village/community halls and religious buildings. It also includes burial sites.*". Officers are therefore satisfied that the proposed school would be considered a community facility.
12. Turning to whether the proposals are considered 'essential', there is an established need for a Special Educational Needs (SEN) school to cover not just Wokingham borough, but Reading borough also. This need is set out in detail in the [Executive Report](#) of 31 January 2019 (and updated in the [Executive Report](#) of 24 September 2020). The Council has a statutory duty to provide appropriate education for children with special educational needs. These reports clearly demonstrate a pressing need for SEN provision to meet these statutory needs, both in terms of insufficient existing local capacity and the associated costs with facilitating out of borough provision. They further demonstrate that the need for SEN spaces is continuing to rise. On this basis, Officers are therefore also satisfied that the proposed need for a new SEN school has been demonstrated as being 'essential'.

13. The next consideration in terms of whether it can be demonstrated that the development “*cannot be accommodated within development limits or through the re-use/replacement of an existing building*”. Of relevance here is that an additional 50 SEN school places have been constructed through an extension to the existing Addington SEN School in Woodley, which is located within development limits. Further expansion at that school is not considered feasible and options to optimise and expand provision on sites within development limits have been proactively utilised.
14. Given the joint nature of the need, a range of alternative site options in Wokingham and Reading boroughs have been considered and deemed less preferable for a range of reasons, including planning constraints, availability, and financial reasons. The application site has been taken through a Department for Education (DfE) bidding process, where, amongst other relevant criteria, it has been found to offer sufficient site area in accordance with DfE guidance, and be much more accessible to both Reading and Wokingham communities, by vehicle, active travel means, and public transport (bus and rail) than alternative site options. A detailed account of the site selection process is provided in the Planning Statement (paragraphs 6.2.19 to 6.2.35). Based on the information provided, this appears to have been a comprehensive process. On this basis, there is no policy objection to the proposals and officers consider that the proposals satisfactorily meet the requirements of exception criterion 6 of Policy CP11.

#### Detailed Design

15. Core Strategy Policies CP1 (Sustainable Development) and CP3 (General Principles for Development) requires high quality design that respects its context. This requirement is amplified by MDD LP Policies CC03 (Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping) and TB21 (Landscape Character). The Government has also recently released a National Design Guide: *Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places* in October 2019

#### Layout

16. As previously mentioned, access to the proposed school would be via a new access road off Woodward Close. This would be located between the existing allotments access track and the Royal British Legion Club. As a result of the formation of this new access and the proposed location of the school building, the existing access track to the allotments would no longer be used, and instead, access to the existing allotments would also be obtained via the school access road, which would connect with the allotments car park. Should planning permission be forthcoming for the proposals, it will be essential to ensure that access to the allotments is available throughout the build programme, and as such, condition 5 is recommended which requires details of how this will be achieved to ensure that the allotment holders are at no time restricted from accessing their plots.
17. The layout of the main part of the school site off the access road would comprise the car park at the front of the school, with the two-storey school building set beyond this further back from the entrance to the site. There would be two access points into the car park to allow a one way ‘in’ and ‘out’ system. A further parking area is proposed on the southern side of the access road into the site which would provide 40 parking spaces. Matters relating to parking provision are discussed below within the highways section of the report. The car park layout has changed since the original planning application submission. This is due to the results of a

further ecology survey revealing the presence of a bat roost in a tree which was originally proposed to be felled (T44). Concerns had also been raised by the Trees and Landscaping officer regarding the proposal to fell this tree due to its age and importance within the existing landscape. This is discussed later in the report. However, it is now proposed that tree T44 will be retained as part of the proposals which is a welcomed amendment to the scheme.

18. The internal design and layout of the school building has been informed with input from Special Educational Needs specialists, in order to ensure that it will satisfactorily serve the needs of its intended users. There would be three entrances along the main frontage of the building. These include the main school entrance, along with separate entrances for both primary and secondary pupils. The general arrangement internally would comprise classrooms being located off a central corridor running through the building. The ground floor would include a mix of primary and secondary classrooms, the school hall, and kitchen/dining facilities. The first floor would follow a similar layout and would include further classrooms, various group/meeting rooms, as well as a staff room.
19. The internal layout has also been designed so the building can facilitate community use of the school hall, along with changing facilities and WC's outside of school hours. Further details of hours of use of such facilities will be required to be submitted for approval through proposed condition 20.
20. The external arrangement of the proposals provide dedicated hard informal outdoor playground areas for the primary and secondary classes to the north of the school building, which can be accessed directly from some of the classrooms. Beyond these areas are soft outdoor PE areas, and a scooter track. A Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) is proposed to the west of the school building along with playing fields to accommodate playing pitches. To the front of the building, the external area provides further hard informal and social areas, and an outdoor dining area. On the east side of the building, an electricity sub-station and fire sprinkler tank would be contained within an enclosure.
21. The layout of the site has also been designed paying regard to BB104 guidelines which provide non-statutory recommended minimum areas for the various components of external spaces for schools. Against these guidelines, the outdoor PE, soft and hard informal social areas, and habitat would meet or exceed the BB104 minimum guidelines in respect of a special needs school provision. There would be no shortfalls against specific categories of outdoor space, although the gross site area of 16925m<sup>2</sup> would be 959m<sup>2</sup> below the BB104 guidelines of 17884m<sup>2</sup> for a school with the pupil intake proposed. The BB104 guidelines also include a 'float' area which can then be used to enhance some areas, depending on the priorities of the school. Whilst there is no designated 'float' area proposed, it is noted that both the soft informal, hard informal and habitat areas significantly exceed the BB104 recommended minimum for these specific areas. It is also noted that BB104 represents best practice and is non-statutory guidance. Furthermore, this application has been made on behalf of the Department for Education and has also involved input from Special Educational Needs specialists, both of whom have been involved throughout the design process to ensure that the proposed layout can successfully deliver the particular needs of the SEN school provision requirements on the site. As such there is no objection to the layout.



22. The school boundary would be secured by a perimeter anti-climb fence to ensure pupils are safely contained within the designated school area when required. It is noted that the Crime Prevention Design Advisor raised no objection to the proposals. Further details of the site perimeter fencing along with fencing details within the site would be submitted pursuant to recommended condition 10. Therefore taking the above into consideration, officers consider the overall layout to be acceptable.

#### Scale, Design and Appearance

23. The school building proposed would be two storeys in height (7.5m) with a flat roof and would measure approximately 100 x 23.5 metres in width and depth. Considerations relating to scale, however, are not limited to the size of a proposed building, but also how it sits within the context of its setting and surrounding area and also in terms of the choice of the proposed materials creating its external appearance.
24. In this instance, the proposed building would have a modern appearance with a flat roof. The façade of the building is proposed to be clad with 'Thermowood' panels, which are heat treated and stain coated so they do not weather over time. These would be arranged across the façade in a mixture of vertically and horizontally placed panels, which would help to visually break up the extent of the building frontage. The predominant colour of the panels would be based on a natural wood palette of colour, although grey cedar panels would be used at points across the façade to further break up the elevation and would also help to distinguish key entrance points into the building. The timber clad façade would be further broken up through the use of aluminium framed windows, which are considered appropriate and would be compatible with the appearance of the timber cladding.
25. The design approach adopted is considered acceptable and appears appropriate to its intended use. As discussed later in the report, there would be some views of the building from surrounding vantage points, however it is considered that its overall design, and choice of neutral/natural coloured palette of materials are acceptable, which would help to soften the overall appearance of the building, and together with further landscaping measures, would appear acceptable in the context of its setting within the countryside. Further details of the proposed materials will be submitted for formal approval pursuant to proposed condition 6.
26. Plant equipment is proposed to be contained internally within a plant room at ground level of the building, which is welcomed as plant equipment sited externally on buildings can often result in unsightly additions to otherwise attractive buildings. As referred to later in the report, whilst there would be solar panels positioned on the roof of the building, these are not likely to be highly visible or detract from the design and appearance of the building, due to being laid flush or slightly raised from the flat roof profile.
27. Taking the above into consideration, the overall proposed design, scale and appearance is therefore considered good quality and appropriate to its setting and intended use as a school.

#### Transport, Highways and Parking

28. The NPPF seeks to encourage sustainable means of transport and a move away from the reliance of the private motor car. Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP6 and

broadly echo these principles and indicate that new development should mitigate any adverse effects on the existing highway network. Policy CC07 refers to the provision of acceptable parking standards as set out within Appendix 2 of the MDD.

29. The application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment (TA) which assesses the impact of development, both in terms of the traffic generated by the development itself, and in the context of the cumulative impact within the wider locality.
30. The TA identifies that the impact of the development, both individually and cumulatively, would not be severe and would not result in an adverse impact on the operation and safety of the local highway network. The submitted TA has been reviewed and WBC Highways are satisfied that the surrounding road network would be able to acceptably accommodate the travel demands of the site. It should also be noted that many of the problem junctions in the surrounding area have already been upgraded or will be as part of borough's SDL development infrastructure.

#### Travel Planning and Public Transport

31. The application is accompanied with an interim Travel Plan which has been reviewed by WBC travel Plan Co-ordinator. This sets out a commitment to work towards Modeshift STARS accreditation (a not for profit membership organisation which aims to secure increased levels of safe, active and sustainable travel in educational establishments, businesses and communities) and also to review the measures and targets once the site is operational. This approach to travel planning is welcomed and regular review of the travel plan is recommended by condition 21.
32. Due to the nature of the school the travel plan indicates that most pupils will be transported by taxi or dedicated school bus to the site, and considerations relating to parking are referred to below. The site is located within a 15 minute walk (approx. 1km) to the nearest bus stops on the Reading Road and Winnersh train station which connect with both Reading and Wokingham stations and whilst pupils are likely to arrive by taxi or bus, there are considered to be suitable alternative travel options for staff other than by private car to the site.

#### Layout

33. Access into the development would be from a new access proposed off Woodwood Close. Details for the new access have been reviewed as part of the application and considered acceptable, however full highways details would be provided through the requirements of condition 9. The access will also serve the allotment site and access to the allotments will be maintained throughout the build process.
34. The application is supported by a number of documents/plans, including vehicle tracking, visibility splays and details of servicing which demonstrate the safety and functionality of the highway provisions

#### Parking and Cycle Parking

35. The proposals will incorporate the provision of 90 parking spaces, which would be split between the main car park directly to the front of the school building, together with a further car park located on the southern side of the school access road. Due to the redesign of the main car park layout in order to retain a mature oak tree which was originally proposed to be removed, the car park on the southern side of

the access road has been increased in order to accommodate further spaces. There would also be a 'drop-off' zone located at the front of the school building.

36. The total proposed parking provision includes 6 disabled spaces and 4 active and 4 passive electric vehicle charging spaces which are in line with Council Standards. However, should the need for additional electric vehicle charging points be identified through the travel plan as the school establishes, these can be added to the site.
37. The level of parking provision proposed has been assessed by Highways and is considered acceptable for this site and considerations in this respect include the fact that it is not anticipated that all staff will drive to the site or be present on site all the time. The Travel Plan will also encourage car sharing and other forms of transport. The DfE consider that the proposed level of parking will be acceptable for the needs of the school.
38. Furthermore, as mentioned above, a Travel Plan has been submitted with the application, which will be required to be regularly reviewed (as required by condition 21). This will ensure that where possible, alternative sustainable means of travel to the site will be utilised, as well as encouraging the avoidance of single occupancy car journeys (initial target is to reduce single occupancy car use by 10% in the first 5 years). It is noted that the school will not be operating at full capacity when it first opens, but will increase in a phased approach over three years. This will therefore enable the success of the travel plan to be monitored to ensure the targets are being successfully achieved whilst the school is building up to full capacity.
39. As already mentioned, the site is considered to be located within acceptable walking distances to the nearest bus stops on the Reading Road, as well as to Winnersh train station. Alternative sustainable methods of travel, walking and cycling, are encouraged to try and reduce the reliance on the private car. As such given the above and the commitment to encouraging alternative and more sustainable modes of transport in conjunction with the implementation of the travel plan, it is considered that the level of parking being provided is appropriate and would be required to be managed in accordance with both the travel plan and details submitted pursuant to condition 23 which requires the submission of a parking management strategy for the site. This will also detail how the drop off and pick up times will be managed on the site. It is noted that a letter from the school operator (Maiden Erlegh Trust) confirms that the proposed pick-up and drop-off area would be managed by the Trust, through the school Travel Plan to ensure the efficient turnover of vehicles during peak times. The Travel Plan will be implemented upon occupation of the school and its management would be overseen by the Trust.
40. In addition, details have been provided in relation to the modal split for staff travelling to Addington School, which is also an SEN school. The results indicate that 63% of staff travel by car to the site, and therefore, should the same modal split be applied to the application site, the level of parking spaces proposed would comfortably accommodate the parking demands for the site.
41. The proposals also provide for cycle and scooter parking provision on the site, the full details for which would be required through condition 24. However, demand for further cycle parking spaces may be identified through the travel plan, and as such,

the travel plan will be expected to detail further provision of cycle parking on the site, should the need be identified.

Flooding and Drainage:

42. Core Strategy Policy CP1 and MDDL Policies CC09 and CC10 establish that new development should avoid increasing and where possible reduce flood risk (from all sources) by first developing in areas with lowest flood risk, carrying out a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) where required and managing surface water in a sustainable manner.
43. A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy has been submitted with the application. The application site falls within Flood Zone 1 where the risk of flooding is low.
44. Surface water run-off is proposed to be managed using a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) including attenuation in pipelines, before being discharged at the greenfield run-off rate. WBCs Flood Risk and Drainage Advisor has reviewed the drainage strategy details submitted in support of this application for the site and is satisfied that the proposals are considered acceptable with regards to matters concerning flood risk and surface water drainage subject to the development being carried out in accordance with the submitted FRA and drainage details. Condition 28 therefore refers.

Landscape and Trees:

45. Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP3 require a high quality design that respects its context. This requirement is amplified by MDDL Policies CC03 and TB21 which require development proposals to protect and enhance the Borough's Green Infrastructure, retaining existing trees, hedges and other landscape features wherever possible and incorporating high quality - ideally native – planting as an integral part of any scheme, within the context of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment. Policy CC02 states that planning permission for proposals at the edge of settlements will only be granted where they can demonstrate that the development, including boundary treatments respects the transition between the built-up area and the open countryside by taking account of the character of the adjacent countryside and landscape'.
46. As the site is within the countryside it is important to understand how the application has addressed the requirements of Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (WBLCA) in accordance with MDD Local Plan Policy TB21.
47. The site is located within the Wokingham – Winnersh Settled and Farmed Clay – J1. Although a large area, much is within existing settlement boundaries so the small areas of countryside outside settlement boundaries mainly consists of arable fields and open space which is fragmented by dominant transport corridors of the M4 and A329(M). As such this landscape has limited valuable landscape attributes, one of which is as a:  
*'Landscape buffer and sense of separation provided by the undeveloped agricultural land and open space between Wokingham and Winnersh, Wokingham and Bracknell, and Wokingham and Sindlesham.'*
48. The WBLCA includes a number of guidelines for this landscape character area, and WBC Trees and landscaping officer has reviewed those relevant to the application

site and considers that the proposed development would have a limited impact on the overall characteristics of landscape character area (LCA) J1. In addition, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been provided as part of the application and considers the impacts of the proposed school and associated work on the existing landscape resource and visual effects from surrounding viewpoints. In this regard, WBC Trees and landscaping officer agrees that the visual effects of the proposed development will be localised and due to limited public viewpoints would seem to be limited to views from the M4 and Woodward Close.

49. Where possible, existing trees and hedgerows are to be retained and this will help to provide an established attractive setting for the proposals, with further tree and hedge planting being provided elsewhere throughout the development. However, some tree removal is required in order to accommodate the proposals. The proposals would now retain all trees located along the northern boundary of the site, along with the existing hedgerow, however, two category B trees adjacent to the existing access road are proposed to be removed.
50. It was also originally proposed that two further Category B trees would be removed as part of the proposals. However, these are now being retained as part of the proposals. One of these trees (T44 – a mature Oak) has been identified as potentially being of veteran or near veteran status and is considered a particularly important tree within the landscape. It is also identified as being of ecological importance and as such, the proposed layout has been amended in order to accommodate its retention and this is a welcomed amendment to the scheme. The originally proposed layout sought to retain the group of trees located to the east of T44. However, due to the need to redesign the car park and to allow for an acceptable root protection area to accommodate tree T44, this group is now proposed to be removed, but mitigation planting will be required as part of the proposed landscaping proposals. This is considered to be an acceptable solution in order to ensure the retention of T44.
51. Vegetation proposed to be removed are 5 individual trees, two tree groups and two boundary hedgerows. Where trees are proposed for removal, replacement planting/landscaping is proposed in order to provide an attractive landscaped setting for the development and to compensate for the tree/hedge removal which would need to take place in order to accommodate the development (condition 11 refers).
52. Retained trees and hedges would be protected during the construction process (as required by condition 14) and condition 13 is proposed in order to ensure the new planting establishes successfully within the landscape.
53. In summary, the proposals are considered to be acceptable in landscape terms, and whilst there would be some tree removal required to accommodate the school, the retained trees and existing and proposed landscaping will ensure the proposals are accommodated within an attractive and established setting in the landscape. Moreover the identified need and benefits of the school provision are (subject to appropriate mitigation), considered to outweigh the harm.

#### Ecology:

54. Core Strategy Policy CP7, carried forward by MDD LP Policy TB23, requires appropriate protection of species and habitats of conservation value. Design

Principle 1b (i-ii) is concerned with protection of ecological habitat and biodiversity features, together with mitigation of any impacts that do arise.

55. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and other accompanying ecological survey reports relating to various species have been submitted in support of the application. These have all been reviewed by WBC Ecologist who has screened out the need for further consideration of the impact of the proposed development upon otters, great crested newts, ground nesting 'farmland' birds (e.g. skylark), badgers and their setts and dormouse.
56. With regards to reptiles, the submitted Reptile Survey report recorded a presence of slow-worm in a number of the hedgerow margins and recording of juvenile creatures, indicating that a population continues to breed on site.
57. The Reptile Survey report classifies the slow-worm population as being 'low'. WBC Ecologist advises that the conservation status of a species of principal importance could be considered to be maintained (or even enhanced) if a mitigation strategy is developed that demonstrates a net gain in suitable habitat area. In this regard, a Reptile Mitigation Strategy has been submitted which proposed a trap and translocate programme with a proposed receptor site being on an adjacent parcel of land to the application site. However, due to concerns regarding the long-term site management and the timescales required to ensure the site was suitably prepared to receive the slow-worms, an alternative WBC existing site nearby (Old Forest Road SANG) has been considered as being a more suitable location, given that it is already established, and would therefore assist in the successful translocation of this protected species. As such, condition 17 requires an updated reptile mitigation strategy to be submitted to reflect this alternative location in order to ensure that this species of principal importance can satisfactorily be considered to be maintained/enhanced to the satisfaction of the Council.
58. The application is supported by a Preliminary Ground Level Bat Roost Assessment of Trees report which identified a number of trees with potential roost features. The classification of the trees as having high roost potential were the subject of follow-up survey work to determine presence/likely absence of bat roosts.
59. Follow-up surveys have identified the presence of a bat roosts in two trees which were initially proposed to be removed. One of these is tree T44, which is now proposed to be retained and as discussed earlier in the report, the layout of the site has been amended in order to accommodate its retention. Tree T40 is the only tree that is proposed to be removed which contains a confirmed bat roost. The mitigation and protection strategy advises that a derogation licence from Natural England will be required to remove this tree, which WBC Ecologist agrees. As such, WBC Ecologist recommends that a pre-commencement condition is applied to secure submission of a copy of the protected species licence, as per BS42020:2013. Condition 16 therefore refers.
60. The NPPF para 170 (d) also requires development to minimise impacts upon and provide net gains for biodiversity and para 180 advises that if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided or mitigated, then planning permission should be refused. A Framework Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy has been submitted in support of this application. This strategy contains

both species conservation measures (e.g. bird boxes) and a biodiversity impact assessment of the proposed habitat changes.

61. WBC Ecologist is in agreement that the proposed species conservation measures will provide some benefit for wildlife and the implementation of these proposals would be secured through condition 18.
62. A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculation has been provided and reviewed by WBC Ecologist who advises that the proposals would result in on-site loss of biodiversity for habitat and hedgerow units. Whilst attempts have been made on-site to avoid loss and provide mitigation, compensation habitat biodiversity net gain will need to be provided to mitigate the developments' impacts and to render the application acceptable with regards to the requirements of the NPPF. In this respect, there are a number of WBC projects that could provide habitat and hedgerow biodiversity units as compensation for on-site loss for this application. This would need to be secured through an agreed strategy using a pro-rata price per (habitat) unit required. As such, condition 19 is recommended which requires the submission of a scheme for the off-setting of the biodiversity impacts, which would need to be assessed and agreed with the Council. Through adopting such an approach in collaboration with the Council, it can be ensured that the requirements of paragraphs 174 and 180 of the NPPF can be met.

#### Environmental Health:

63. Core Strategy Policy CP3 requires that new development should be of a high quality of design that does not cause significant detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users and their quality of life. Various reports have been submitted with the application relating to Environmental Health considerations around contamination, noise and air quality.

#### Land Contamination

64. Various contamination surveys have been submitted with the application relating to assessments of groundwater and gas monitoring data as well as any potential existing contamination, all of which have been reviewed by WBC Environmental Health Officer (EHO). The findings of the reports conclude that whilst some minor exceedances of contaminants have been identified, these are not considered to be indicative of a source of contamination or likely to pose a significant risk to ground or surface water. WBC Environmental Health Officer accepts the findings of these reports and therefore recommends a condition relating to managing any unexpected contamination encountered during construction (condition 29 refers).
65. Construction activities such as vehicle re-fuelling, the operation of welfare facilities, earthworks, and stockpiling has the potential to contaminate the round, shallow surface water bodies, ground water and surface water bodies if not properly controlled. Mitigation measures including containment and appropriate storage of materials and waste would be required to be included within the CEMP.

#### Air Quality

66. An Air Quality Screening assessment has been submitted which considers the following:
- The introduction of future users to an area of poor air quality (emissions from M4)
  - The operational impacts – the impact of the proposed development on air quality
  - The temporary impact on air quality from fugitive dust during construction.

67. The assessment of air quality on future users concludes that future users would not be exposed to unacceptable pollutant concentrations. The site is within 0.6km of an existing Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) that runs along the M4. Predictions are that the Air Quality Objectives for NO<sub>2</sub> will not be exceeded at the application site. WBC EHO accepts that this conclusion is reasonable given the distance to the AQMA even with the uncertainty arising from on-going smart motorway works and current restrictions on speed and traffic flow.

68. It is noted that concerns relating to issues around air quality have been raised through the public consultation exercise, in particular with regards to the timing of when the air quality assessment was undertaken. The applicant has provided the following information around this issue:-

*“Whilst it is has been noted that roadworks were underway on the M4 during 2019, a further review of the Wokingham Borough Council 2020 Annual Status Report indicates that NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations, at the monitoring locations considered, were well below the Air Quality Objective (40ug/m<sup>3</sup>) since 2015. Additionally, there has been an overall reduction in NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations at these diffusion tube locations since 2017. Therefore, the reduction in NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations cannot be directly attributed to the roadworks on the M4 motorway.*

*Regarding the consideration of WOK70 and WOK71, both monitoring locations have recorded NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations well below the Air Quality Objective since 2015, with an overall general reduction (particularly at WOK70), according to the Wokingham Borough Council 2020 Annual Status Report. This provides further indication that the pre M4 roadwork condition would not give rise to elevated NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations.*

*Although the DEFRA predicted background PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration is marginally above the WHO recommended guideline of 10ug/m<sup>3</sup>, these guidelines are not considered within the Air Quality Standards Regulations (2016) and are therefore, not UK and EU legislation. The background concentration is well below the Air Quality Objective (25ug/m<sup>3</sup>) and subsequently, well within statutory limits.*

*The proposed Taylor Wimpey development is not a currently committed or approved development, however the traffic levels generated along the access route are not likely to result any significant exceedance of the NO<sub>2</sub> Air Quality Objective given the current DEFRA background concentration of 20.8ug/m<sup>3</sup> is approximately 52% of the Air Quality Objective.”*

69. The above information has been reviewed by WBC EHO who agrees that the reduction in NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations cannot be attributed fully to work on the motorways and covid related reduction in traffic flow as data collected before this time (ASR 2020 reporting on 2019 data) was indicating falling levels below the Air quality Objective for NO<sub>2</sub>. He also agrees that the PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations are well below the statutory limit.

70. The operational impacts on air quality have been screened out as not being significant, a conclusion which is also accepted by the EHO.



71. The temporary impact of fugitive dust emission during site clearance and construction can be minimised using the mitigation measures set out in the accompanying Construction and Environmental Management Plan. has been submitted with the application which includes dust control measures.

#### Noise

72. The submitted noise impact assessment considers the noise environment within the school against the requirements of BB93 Acoustic Design of Schools whilst a separate Acoustic Design Report has been submitted which sets out how appropriate noise levels will be achieved within the school in accordance with BB93 and building regulations. In order to meet the requirements of BB93 with regards to internal ambient noise levels, the report sets out the required acoustic performance of the glazing to be used on the building, together with a hybrid ventilation system. As compliance with BB93 with regards to these issues are dealt with through Building Regulations rather than planning, the EHO has not provided any further comment on this particular aspect of the submission. As planning conditions should not be imposed in relation to issues which are covered by separate legislation, this issue is not considered further within this report and will be secured through the relevant building regulation process for the development.

73. Whilst Building Bulletin 93 Acoustic Design of Schools - Performance Standards does not cover external play areas/teaching areas and this aspect is not specifically addressed within the submission, the acoustic modelling submitted shows that the majority of the outdoor areas will be acoustically shielded by the school buildings. The WHO Guidance on Community Noise and BS8233 recommends a level below 50dB for external amenity areas (gardens /balconies etc) for residential properties rising to a maximum of 55dB. This is based on the health impacts of long term exposure to noise and the EHO advises that if this was a residential development, it would be considered acceptable as the modelling shows that the external ambient noise level lies between 50 and 55dB. Due to the likely activities that will take place externally at the school i.e. use of playing pitches, playgrounds, officers are satisfied that the proposals would be acceptable with regards to external ambient background noise levels. It is also noted that there has been no concerns raised in this regard from the DfE.

74. The noise impact assessment considers the impact of plant noise on sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the new school and identifies the existing Wheatfield Primary School as the nearest noise sensitive receptor. The assessment concludes that the rating level of plant noise when assessed at the nearest noise sensitive receptor should not exceed 47dB LA,Tr to ensure that it is at least 5 dB below the prevailing background sound level and will therefore not be audible. Condition 30 is therefore recommended to ensure that this limit is applied (although noting that the proposals do indicate that the plant associated with the school building is proposed to be contained internally).

75. An assessment of noise from community use in the school hall outside normal school hours has also been carried out. However, the results indicate that use of the school hall outside of normal school hours would not be audible at the nearest noise sensitive receptors. Notwithstanding this, condition 20 does require details to be submitted in relation to the proposed out of hours use of the school hall and other facilities on site, in order to ensure such use would not be harmful to surrounding amenities.

76. As mentioned, the nearest noise sensitive receptor is the Wheatfield Primary school, which lies adjacent to the west boundary of the application site. The proposed layout of the site would result in the school playing fields being located adjacent to the car-park and external playing fields of the adjacent school and not directly adjacent to the school building itself. It is considered that this arrangement is acceptable with regards to potential noise impacts from/to the adjacent school and it is noted that there have been no concerns raised by the adjacent school with regards to the proposals.
77. Noise, disturbance and inconvenience during the construction period will be managed and minimised as far as is reasonable through good practice and through adherence to the Construction Environmental Management Plan. It is noted that the school building will be a modular build (built off-site) and as such the degree of construction activity on site would be significantly less than if the building was being wholly constructed on site. The hours of construction activity would be controlled by proposed condition 4.

Sustainable Design/Construction:

78. Core Strategy Policy CP1 requires development to contribute towards the goal of achieving zero carbon development by including on-site renewable energy features and minimising energy and water consumption. This is amplified by MDDL policies CC04: Sustainable design and construction and CC05: Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks and the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (May 2010). As the proposal is a non-residential proposal of over 1000sqm, Policy CC05 also advises that planning permission will only be granted for such proposals that deliver a minimum 10% reduction in carbon emissions through renewable energy or low carbon technology.
79. A sustainability and energy statement has been submitted alongside the application which sets out the various renewable and low energy technology measures proposed to be used in the design of the development in order to reduce energy demand on site, and as such, reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The proposed energy efficiency measures for the design of the school include the adoption of a fabric first approach, and in addition, the use of photovoltaics (PV) solar panels, and air source heat pumps as renewable energy measures. Through a simulated modelling exercise, the report concludes that the proposals would result in carbon reductions of over 100% above building regulation requirements. This is a welcomed approach which would result in a development that would exceed the carbon reduction requirements of Policy CC05. The applicant's planning statement also advises that the construction of the school will be undertaken having regard to the principles of BREEAM. Proposed Condition 26 therefore recommends that the development is carried out in accordance with the proposed energy and sustainability measures identified within the report.

Heritage:

80. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 establishes a statutory duty to consider the effect on heritage assets: development should preserve or enhance the character and setting of listed buildings. In considering designated heritage assets, the NPPF (Para 132) requires 'great weight to be given to the asset's conservation', and that any harm should require 'clear and convincing justification'. The MDD Local Plan (TB24) requires that '...works to or affecting

heritage assets or their setting to demonstrate that the proposals would at least conserve and, where possible enhance the important character and special architectural or historic interest of the building.’

81. The Application Site does not contain any nationally designated (protected) heritage assets, such as scheduled monuments, listed buildings or registered parks and gardens. The site is also not located within a Conservation Area. As such, the proposal raises no concerns with regards to impacts upon any designated heritage assets.

Archaeology:

82. MDD Policy TB25 states that in areas of high archaeological potential, applicants will be required to provide a detailed assessment of the impact on archaeological remains. If development is likely to affect an area of high archaeological potential or an area which is likely to contain archaeological remains, the presumption is that appropriate measures shall be taken to protect remains by preservation in situ. Where this is not practical, applicants shall provide for excavation, recording and archiving of the remains.
83. Berkshire Archaeology have responded on the application and advise that due to there being archaeological potential on the site (based on their understanding of known archaeology in the area) condition 31 is proposed, requiring the submission of a written scheme of investigation to be submitted for approval in consultation with Berkshire Archaeology.

Community Infrastructure Levy and Special Protection Area (SPA):

84. The nature of the proposed development is not CIL liable and due to the nature of the proposals being for a school development, they would not give rise to issues concerning possible impacts upon the SPA.

Employment Skills:

85. Policy TB12 of the Wokingham Borough Council MDD, requires planning applications for all major development (both commercial and residential) in Wokingham Borough to submit an employment skills plan (ESP) with a supporting method statement.
86. An employment skills plan has been submitted alongside the application which sets out local employment opportunities for the proposed development. This has been reviewed and considered acceptable. Condition 32 is therefore recommended to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the submitted details.

**CONCLUSION**

For the reasons outlined in the above report, the SEN school proposals are considered to be a sustainable development site that would offer significant benefit to help meet an identified pressing need for additional SEN provision within the Borough. The proposed design of the school is considered to be of high quality and although the site is not located within the existing settlement boundary, the principle of the development is considered to accord with the policy exception criteria concerning out of settlement proposals. There are also no significant impacts to existing residents or the adjacent school. The benefits and proposed mitigation measures of the scheme are considered to outweigh any harm identified and as such there are not considered to be any resulting harmful impacts arising from the

proposals which would warrant the refusal of planning permission on this basis. There are no other material planning considerations of significant weight that would dictate that the application should be refused. Officers therefore recommend the application for approval, subject to the conditions listed.

**The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)**

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

Encs. Site location plan; Site layout plan; floor plans and elevations; Photos; Winnersh Parish Council comments