

# Agenda Item 55.

<b>Development Management Ref No</b>	<b>No weeks on day of committee</b>	<b>Parish</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Listed by:</b>
150595	18/13	Woodley	Loddon	Major application

<b>Applicant</b>	Harry A Coff Limited		
<b>Location</b>	Courtyard Offices, Sandford Farm, Mohawk Way, Woodley	<b>Postcode</b>	RG5 4TE
<b>Proposal</b>	Outline Application for the demolition of existing buildings and construction of up to 21 no. dwellings with associated open space and new vehicular access- all matters reserved		
<b>Type</b>	Major - dwellings (10+)		
<b>PS Category</b>	1		
<b>Officer</b>	Graham Vaughan		

<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Planning Committee on 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2015
<b>REPORT PREPARED BY</b>	Head of Development Management and Regulatory Services

## SUMMARY

The application site is within a major development location in the settlement of Woodley and is currently occupied by single storey offices (6 units in total). It is adjacent to the Sandford Farm development which is currently under construction. Other than the offices, the site has a large amount of hard standing with some grassed areas particularly to the west. The offices are accessed from a side road off Perimeter Road (which has now become part of the Sandford Farm development) and there is ample parking on the site.

The application is outline with all matters reserved and seeks permission for up to 21 dwellings on the site. This would be provided primarily through semi-detached properties and also a block of flats. Parking and amenity space are shown on an indicative layout plan as well as a position for the access, although this would likely use the existing. The indicative layout demonstrates that 21 dwellings could be accommodated on the site and achieves the relevant guidelines for parking and amenity space. Therefore, the scheme is compliant with the development plan and is recommended for conditional approval.

## PLANNING STATUS

- Major development location
- SSSI buffer zone
- Landfill gas consultation zone
- Contaminated land consultation zone
- Sand and gravel extraction
- Wind turbine safeguarding zone
- Tree Preservation Order (adjacent)

## RECOMMENDATION

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

- A. The signing of a section 106 agreement to secure the provision of affordable housing.**

## **B. Conditions and informatives:**

1. a) No development shall commence until details of the access, appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and the development shall be carried out as approved.  
  
b) Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the local planning authority not later than three years from the date of this permission.  
  
c) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved. *Reason: In pursuance of s.92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).*
2. This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered 'RG-M-02 Rev B', 'RG-M-04' and 'RG-M-10 Rev A' received by the local planning authority on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the principles of the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.  
*Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.*
3. Before the development hereby permitted is commenced, 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*
4. Before the development hereby permitted is commenced details of all boundary treatment(s) shall first be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development or phased as agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be maintained in the approved form for so long as the development remains on the site.  
*Reason: In the interests of amenity and highway safety. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6*
5. 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. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21*

6. 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: 2015 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 or other operation shall commence on site until a Tree Survey (linked to the scheme stated above) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- c) 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.
- d) 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.
- e) 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*

7. Prior to the demolition of the existing buildings and structures and prior to development of the site, an assessment shall be carried out to determine whether any harmful materials are present and where such materials are found then measures shall be taken to prevent such materials from contaminating the land to be redeveloped. No building shall be occupied until a report detailing the assessment and where necessary mitigation measures undertaken, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.  
*Reason: To ensure any contamination on the site is remedied to protect the existing/proposed occupants of the application site and adjacent land. Relevant Policy: Core Strategy Policy CP3*
8. No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The plan shall detail how noise and vibration during the construction phase will be controlled taking into account the impact on future occupiers of the adjacent site and any mitigation methods that may be necessary. The approved management plan shall be adhered to throughout the construction period.  
*Reason: To ensure noise and vibration does not have a harmful impact on residential amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3*
9. No development shall commence until a programme of archaeological work (which may comprise more than one phase of work) has been implemented in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.  
*Reason: The site is identified as being 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 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB25*
10. No development shall take place until full details of the Drainage System have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. These shall include:
- Confirmation of the design of the permeable Paving set out in principle in the WSP Drainage Strategy May 2015;
  - Results of intrusive ground investigations demonstrating the depth of any seasonally high groundwater table and infiltration rates determined in accordance with BRE Digest 365;
  - Full calculations demonstrating the performance of the permeable paving;
  - Full details of all components of the drainage scheme including dimensions, locations and gradients, invert and cover levels as appropriate;
  - Full details of the maintenance arrangements for the development covering every aspect of the proposed drainage system;
  - If infiltration to ground is not found to be viable correspondence from Thames Water confirming agreement in principle to discharge to the main surface water sewer network for this type of development; and,
  - Full details of the proposed levels across the site together with an assessment of the existing surface water flood flow routes through the site to demonstrate that surface water flood risk will not be exacerbated as a result of the development. The drainage system shall be installed in accordance with the approved details

and thereafter maintained as such.

*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*

11. No development shall commence until an Employment and Skills Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Employment and Skills Plan shall show how the development hereby permitted provides opportunities for training, apprenticeship or other vocational initiatives to develop local employability skills and shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details. *Reason: To ensure training opportunities are available for local workers. Relevant policy: Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB12*

12. No development shall take place until full details of a reptile mitigation plan have been submitted to and approved in writing by local planning authority. The surveys, mitigation and contingency measures contained within the plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plan unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.  
*Reason: To ensure that reptiles, a European Protected Species, are not adversely impacted upon as a result of the development.*

13. No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide for:

- i) the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors,
- ii) loading and unloading of plant and materials,
- iii) storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development,
- iv) the erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate,
- v) wheel washing facilities,
- vi) measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction,
- vii) a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works.

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

14. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted details of secure and covered bicycle storage/ parking facilities for the occupants of and visitors to the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The cycle storage/ parking shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved before occupation of the development hereby permitted, and shall be permanently retained in the approved form for the parking of bicycles and used for no other purpose.  
*Reason: In order to ensure that secure weather-proof bicycle parking facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

15. No part of any building(s) hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until vehicle parking and turning space has been provided in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The vehicle parking and turning space so-approved shall be retained in accordance with the approved details and the parking space remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times and the turning space shall not be used for any purpose other than vehicle turning.

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

16. The Reserved Matters applications shall be submitted in accordance with the following details and the principles of the development as per the submitted plans received by the Local Planning Authority on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015:

Parking	To be designed to comply with Wokingham Borough Council Parking Standards
Scale	To be designed to two storey level
Access	All vehicular access will be onto Main Street
Internal Space Standards	To comply with national internal space standards
Location of houses	No proposed dwelling shall be located any closer to the southern boundary of the site as detailed on plan RG-M-01 Rev K.

*Reason: To ensure any reserved matters application does not compromise the delivery of suitable and appropriate housing for the site. Relevant Policies: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3*

17. The Reserved Matters applications shall include details of all external lighting which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include the type of lighting and measures to prevent light pollution and any external lighting shall be provided in accordance with the approved details before the site comes into use.

*Reason: To prevent an adverse impact upon wildlife and safeguard amenity and highway safety. Relevant Policies: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3, CP6 and CP7.*

18. The mitigation strategy given in paragraphs 5.1.1 to 5.1.5 inclusive and Appendix 3 of the submitted Bat Emergence Survey report (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, Ref: R876/c, September 2015) shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved plan unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority. A report demonstrating the measures implemented shall be submitted to the local planning authority on completion of the development.

*Reason: To ensure that bats, a European Protected Species, are not adversely impacted upon as a result of the development.*

19. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), the garage accommodation on

the site identified on the approved plans shall be kept available for the parking of vehicles ancillary to the residential use of the site at all times. It shall not be used for any business nor as habitable space.

*Reason: To ensure that adequate parking space is available on the site, so as to reduce the likelihood of roadside parking, in the interests of highway safety and convenience. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

20. Notwithstanding the provisions of Classes A, B, D and E of Part 1 of the Second Schedule the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no buildings, enlargement or alterations permitted shall be carried out without the express permission in writing of the local planning authority.

*Reason: To safeguard the character of the area and residential amenities of future and neighbouring occupiers. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB21*

21. No work relating to the development hereby approved, including works of demolition or preparation prior to building operations, shall take place other than between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank or National Holidays.

*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.*

22. 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 Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC04*

23. The dwelling(s) shall achieve potable water consumption targets of 105 litres or less per person per day.

*Reason: To ensure developments contribute to sustainable development. 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 CC04.*

#### *Informatives*

1. The applicant is reminded that this approval is granted subject to conditions which must be complied with prior to the development starting on site. Commencement of the development without complying with the pre-

commencement requirements may be outside the terms of this permission and liable to enforcement action. The information required should be formally submitted to the Council for consideration with the relevant fee. Once the details have been approved in writing the development should be carried out only in accordance with those details. If this is not clear please contact the case officer to discuss.

2. This permission should be read in conjunction with the legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act dated **[Insert appropriate date]**, the obligations in which relate to this development.
3. The development hereby permitted is liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Liability Notice issued by Wokingham Borough Council will state the current chargeable amount. A revised Liability Notice will be issued if this amount changes. Anyone can formally assume liability to pay, but if no one does so then liability will rest with the landowner. There are certain legal requirements that must be complied with. For instance, whoever will pay the levy must submit an Assumption of Liability form and a Commencement Notice to Wokingham Borough Council prior to commencement of development. For more information see - <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/developers/cil/cil-processes/>

#### **PLANNING HISTORY**

Applications relating to the erection and extension of office space since 2000. No previous applications received relating to housing.

#### **SUMMARY INFORMATION**

Site Area	0.39 hectares
Existing residential units	0
Proposed units	21
Existing use	Offices – 6 units
Existing parking spaces	Minimum of 5
Proposed parking spaces	33

#### **CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

Crime Prevention Design Advisor	No comments received
National Grid	No comments received
Berkshire Archaeology	No objection subject to condition (9)
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue	No comments received
Southern Gas Networks	No comments received
SSE Power Distribution	No comments received
NHS Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Group	No comments received
BBOWT	No objection subject to condition (18)
Thames Water	No comments received
Highways	No objection subject to conditions (13 – 17, 19)
Biodiversity	No objection subject to conditions (12, 18)
Tree and Landscape	No objection subject to conditions (4 – 6, 22)
Environmental Health	No objection subject to condition (7)
Drainage	No objection subject to condition (10)
Education	No comments received
Waste Services	No comments received
Parks and Open Spaces	No comments received

Policy	No objection
Property Services	No comments received
Sports Development	No comments received
Community Infrastructure	No comments received
Woodley Parish Council	No objection
Local Members	No comments received

### REPRESENTATIONS

3 letters of objection received with regards to the following:

- Over development
- Site acts as a buffer between residential areas
- Increase in traffic
- Impact on wildlife
- Noise and dirt from construction and construction vehicles
- Loss of green space
- Local infrastructure already at capacity

### APPLICANTS POINTS

- The site is in a highly sustainable location for new housing
- The proposals are of a high quality providing a mix of dwellings and affordable housing and will assist in the delivery of new housing
- The development has been designed to respond to the surrounding character of development

### PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	<b>NPPF</b>	National Planning Policy Framework
Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010	<b>CP1</b>	Sustainable Development
	<b>CP3</b>	General Principles for Development
	<b>CP4</b>	Infrastructure Requirements
	<b>CP5</b>	Housing mix, Density and Affordability
	<b>CP6</b>	Managing Travel Demand
	<b>CP7</b>	Biodiversity
	<b>CP9</b>	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
	<b>CP15</b>	Employment Development
Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	<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>CC09</b>	Development and Flood Risk
	<b>CC10</b>	Sustainable Drainage
	<b>TB05</b>	Housing Mix
	<b>TB07</b>	Internal Space Standards

	<b>TB21</b>	Landscape Character
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	<b>BDG</b>	Borough Design Guide – Section 4
	<b>WPSS</b>	Wokingham Parking Standards Study Report October 2011

## **PLANNING ISSUES**

### Description of Development:

1. The scheme is for the erection of up to 21 residential units with associated parking, amenity space and access. Whilst some of the dwellings would be accessed from the road running through the Sandford Farm development, the other dwellings would be accessed from a new road in the site. The development would consist primarily of two storey semi-detached dwellings to the north (with one detached) and a block of flats to the south. An area of landscaping would be provided to the west of the site to complement the existing tree line. The application is outline with all matters reserved and therefore the layout and site plan is indicative only.

### Principle of Development:

2. 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 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.
3. The site is located within a major development location and within a settlement boundary and as such the development should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers and this is discussed below.
4. Policy CP15 of the Core Strategy requires that there should not be an overall loss of B1, B2 or B8 use floor space across the Borough. The proposal would result in the loss of B1 use floor space and could be considered to conflict with this policy. However, the office has been vacant and on the market for some time and the submitted marketing report demonstrates this. The report states that there is an oversupply of offices in the local area which has led to little interest in Courtyard Offices as other premises are more appropriate. In particular, the current offices are not of a high standard internally and require investment to be improved.
5. The report states that the marketing of the offices has been conducted appropriately with relevant rates being asked for and for a suitable length of time but no serious attempt has been made to purchase the offices. An independent consultant has assessed this report and has raised some issues with the detail of

the marketing that has been carried out. Additional information has been provided by the applicant with regards to this and it is considered that a suitable marketing strategy has been undertaken. In particular, details of how the units were marketed and the level of interest this generated have been provided. The marketing generated five viewings in four years with the specification, location and lack of amenities quoted as an issue.

6. Overall, the offices have had sporadic occupation and marketing has led to little interest. They require investment to be more appropriate for office use and the applicant wishes to explore an alternative use. Furthermore, under permitted development, the offices could be changed to a residential use in any case. However, given the likely internal standard this would need to be constructed to, it is unlikely this would occur and therefore only limited weight is attached to this. Added to this is the fact the offices are not in a core employment area and are instead in a residential area. As such, weight should be given to the fact offices in core employment areas will be more protected than the Courtyard offices. Therefore, the loss of the offices is considered justified particularly given the general context and location of the site within a major development location residential is considered an appropriate land use in principle

Impact on the Character of the Area:

7. Given the adjacent site and the current ongoing construction, it is acknowledged that the proposal site would be surrounded by residential development. Whilst it is noted that other uses can coexist next to residential development, the character of the area is predominantly residential. In this respect, the change of use is not considered to have a harmful impact.
8. Whilst it is acknowledged that each proposal is on its own merits and each should have its own identity, due to the proximity to the adjacent housing development, the proposal needs to be able to integrate with it in terms of the design and the layout. As all matters are reserved, some parts of this would be decided at the reserved matters stage however it needs to be assessed that the proposal could be accommodated on the site and still sufficiently integrate with the Sandford Farm development.
9. **Density:** The site is within settlement and would be accessed from the main road through Sandford Farm. It is surrounded by residential development but the Woodley Airfield development and Sandford Farm development exhibit different characteristics. Primarily the Sandford Farm development is at a higher density of 34 dwellings per hectare. Given that the proposal would front onto this and there is a strong visual divide from the vegetation to the west, it is considered more appropriate to reflect the new residential area currently being constructed. Due to the size of the site, the proposal would have a high density, approximately 55 dwellings per hectare. However, this is primarily due to the number of flats that are proposed. In terms of buildings on the site itself, the density is not considered to be inappropriate when taken in the context of the surrounding area.
10. **Housing Mix:** The indicative proposal incorporates the following mix:  
4 x 2 bed dwellings

6 x 3 bed dwellings  
1 x 4 bed dwellings  
3 x 1 bed flats  
7 x 2 bed flats

11. This incorporates several different housing types to cater for a range of household sizes and is considered to be an acceptable mix to meet the requirements of the Core Strategy and MDD.
12. **Scale:** The application is an outline proposal with all matters reserved however some consideration should be given in assessing whether the site could achieve 21 units at an appropriate scale. The information provided shows that the proposed dwellings and flats would be two storeys. This is considered to be in keeping with the local area and therefore the scale of the proposal as indicated is acceptable. Detailed consideration of the appropriateness of scale will be considered at the Reserved Matters stage.
13. **Layout:** The application is an outline proposal with all matters reserved however some consideration should be given in assessing whether the site could achieve 21 units in an appropriate layout. The site would be accessed from 'Main Street' of the Sandford Farm development with a road provided simple access to the line of dwellings beyond. Parking would be provided in front of the flats and to the side of dwellings with additional parking near the western boundary. Furthermore, all of the units would have access to amenity space. The built form of the site would be dispersed with some landscaping along the main road but also an area to the west which would complement the existing tree line.
14. It is noted that the layout is relatively tight however the indicative plan shows that amenity space provision and separation distances could be met. Furthermore, whilst additional landscaping would be beneficial, particularly to the east of the site, this needs to be balanced against the adjacent Sandford Farm development both in terms of the open space to the south, and the relatively built up nature of the development. Concern was raised regarding the proximity of the flats to the southern boundary and the potential for the scheme to appear cramped, given that boundary treatment would be required. However, this has been overcome by moving the flat building northwards to provide a suitable distance between the building and edge of the site. Overall therefore, it is considered the indicative layout demonstrates that up to 21 residential units could be accommodated on the site satisfactorily. In order to ensure appropriate space amenity space would be retained in the future, it is considered necessary to remove permitted development rights by condition (20).
15. **Design and Appearance:** The visual and physical integration of the properties would need to be agreed at a reserved matters stage and in particular the architectural design. However, it is considered the site is surrounded by residential development and therefore further residential properties would be acceptable subject to appropriate materials (condition 3) although as stated this would need to reflect the adjacent development.
16. As stated, consideration should be given to the integration with the adjacent development. The scheme currently being built has a relatively dense and urban

design with houses close to the road and accesses to garages set further back. It is considered the indicative design of the Courtyard Offices site would be similar to this. Furthermore, blocks of flats are used in the Sandford Farm development to provide built form on the corner that addresses two directions and act as a focus point. The indicative layout at the Courtyard Offices also reflects this approach. Similarly, the flats would address the public open space providing natural surveillance of the surrounding area. Whilst design matters would be agreed at reserved matters stage, the indicative layout is considered appropriate with regard to the adjacent development.

#### Residential Amenities:

17. The proposed residential units would be of a sufficient distance away from adjacent residential units to ensure no harmful impact would occur on any neighbouring residential amenities. With regard to the development itself, all separation distances as advised in the Borough Design Guide are met and therefore no harmful impact on residential amenity would occur. Given the illustrative nature of the proposal this would be assessed as part of the subsequent reserved matters application.

#### Access and Movement:

18. **Highway Safety and Road Design:** The site is already accessed from a spur of Perimeter Road. This would be utilised for the proposed development however as the application is outline with all matters reserved, an indicative location of the access is all that is required at this stage. This would be approximately within the same location as the current site access. Given the existing access, and the fact the street would be a main thoroughfare for the adjacent Sandford Farm development, this is acceptable. The illustrative masterplan also shows parking some houses accessed directly off of the same road. This follows a similar pattern in terms of accesses to the opposite side of the road. It would need to be ensured that all of these accesses would be sufficient to maintain highway and pedestrian safety. Additional and more detailed information regarding access would be required at a reserved matters stage.
19. **Parking:** To comply with the current parking standards, 33 spaces would be required on site to accommodate allocated, unallocated and visitor parking. This is shown to be achieved on the illustrative masterplan without taking the garage spaces into account. As such, it is considered the indicative layout demonstrates parking for 21 dwellings could be accommodated on the site.
20. **Sustainability:** Secure, covered cycle storage would be required however this would be agreed at reserved matters stage. As such, a condition (14) has been attached. Additionally, residents would also be able to use local bus services. As such, this is considered acceptable.

#### Flooding:

21. The site is located in Flood Zone 1 is less than a hectare in size and therefore there is no requirement to submit a Flood Risk Assessment. The site is shown to be at risk for surface water flooding however the submitted details indicate an appropriate drainage scheme could be achieved. Additionally, the majority of the

site is already hard standing and relatively flat and therefore no significant risk is considered to occur. As a result, appropriate drainage matters could be controlled through a condition (10).

#### Landscape and Trees:

22. The site itself is mainly hardstanding with the current office units and some grassed areas. The western boundary comprises of a substantial bank of trees which provide a natural barrier between the site and Perimeter Road. Additionally, the trees to the south west corner are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (170/1980) however are outside of the red line of the application.
23. Although the Tree and Landscape Officer considers the proposal to be cramped, it is not considered that this has a harmful impact to the extent that appropriate planting and landscaping could not be achieved and further details would be agreed at the reserved matters stage. At this outline stage, the Tree and Landscape Officer has requested conditions requiring a landscaping scheme (5), tree survey and arboricultural method statement (6). As such, the indicative layout demonstrates 21 dwellings could be achieved on the site with suitable landscaping.
24. From a wider landscape perspective, the proposal would be surrounded by residential development and therefore additional residential units are considered acceptable. Furthermore, the area to the south of the site is being provided as open space for the adjacent development.

#### Environmental Health

25. Due to the proximity to the former landfill site potential contamination needs to be addressed and should take into account the remediation being carried out on the adjacent development. Furthermore, an assessment of noise and vibration during the construction phase should be carried out taking into account the impact on future occupiers of the adjacent site and any mitigation methods that may be necessary. This can be controlled by condition (7 and 8).

#### Amenity Space for future occupiers:

26. The Borough Design Guide states that new dwellings should provide an amenity space of 11 metres in length and this is shown to be achieved for the proposed dwellings. The Borough Design Guide also advises that flats should have access to some amenity space. This has been increased since the submission of the application and is now considered at an acceptable level. As such, the indicative layout demonstrates that suitable amenity space could be achieved for the proposal.

#### Internal Space Standards

27. Internal space standards are not considered at an outline stage but could be considered through reserved matters. However, since 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 national space standards have been in place. Although these are optional, due to policy TB07 of the MDD, developments must adhere to the new DCLG national space

standards. As such, it is considered necessary to condition (16) that any reserved matters application is submitted in accordance with these standards.

#### Biodiversity:

28. **Bats:** A daylight and emergence survey has been carried out and concludes that bats occasionally use the buildings on the site. As a result, the demolition of the buildings would lead to a negative impact on bat habitats and a European Protected Species license would be required. Subject to obtaining this and appropriate mitigation as set out in the survey report, the Ecology officer considers the impact on bats would be mitigated.

29. **Reptiles:** As reptiles were found on the adjacent Sandford Farm site, the Ecology Officer considers it likely that a reptile population could exist on the Courtyard Offices site. As no information has been provided to dispute this, a mitigation strategy to identify the high risk areas and actions required to minimise the risk of injuring or killing reptiles during construction is necessary and can be controlled by condition (12).

#### Sustainability:

30. Due to the replacement of the Code for Sustainable Homes with national standards in building regulations, the proposal is not required to meet Code 4 in line with Policy CC04 of the MDD. However, the policy does require that all development should incorporate suitable waste management facilities including on-site recycling. It is considered that sufficient internal and external storage could be provided to accommodate this. Additionally, potable water targets are referred to in Policy CC04 and therefore this can be controlled by condition (23).

#### Community Infrastructure Levy, Affordable Housing and SPA:

31. **Community Infrastructure Levy:** As the proposal is for the construction of new dwellings, it would be a CIL liable development. As this is an outline application, a CIL liability notice would not be issued until the approval of the last outstanding reserved matter. The CIL charge for new residential development is set at £365 per square metre for any net increase in residential floor space. As a result, the CIL charge for this development would be approximately £330,004.10. It is noted however that the scheme would likely include some affordable housing and therefore an exemption for part of the CIL charge could potentially be applied for.

32. **Affordable Housing:** The proposal meets the threshold for the provision of affordable housing as per Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy. This would be 30% or 6.3 units, but it has been agreed that 7 of the 2 bed flats could be provided as affordable. As such, a legal agreement is being drafted to agree this. Subject to this, the provision of affordable housing is considered to be acceptable.

33. **Special Protection Area:** The proposal does not meet the threshold for mitigation against the SPA. As such, a mitigation strategy or contribution to the Council's agreed mitigation strategy is not required.

#### Archaeology:

34. Due to potential archaeological remains in the area, the Council's archaeological consultant has recommended a condition (9) be placed requiring the approval of a written scheme of investigation prior to development occurring on site.

Employment Skills:

35. Policy TB12 of the MDD states that any major application *“must be accompanied by an Employment and Skills Plan to show how the proposal accords opportunities for training, apprenticeship or other vocational initiatives to develop local employability skills required by developers, contractors or within the applicants industry”*. This is to encourage the use of local labour for proposals and as such, it is considered a condition (11) requiring details of this to be submitted and approved in writing prior to development would be appropriate.

**CONCLUSION**

The application is considered to be acceptable principle as the loss of the offices is not considered to have a harmful impact to the extent it would warrant refusing the application. The change of use to residential would be in keeping with the surrounding area. The application is outline with all matters reserved however it has been demonstrated that up to 21 residential units could be accommodated on the site. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with local and national planning policy and is therefore recommended for approval.

**CONTACT DETAILS**

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