

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 8 MARCH 2023 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.30 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey (Chair), Andrew Mickleburgh (Vice-Chair), Chris Bowring, Stephen Conway, Rebecca Margetts, Alistair Neal and Wayne Smith

Councillors Present and Speaking

Councillors: Graham Howe

Officers Present

Kamran Akhter, Principal Highways Development Control Officer
Rachel Lucas, Legal Services
Madeleine Shopland, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Brian Conlon, Operational Lead – Development Management

Case Officers Present

Joanna Carter
Helen Maynard
Kieran Neumann

89. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors David Cornish and John Kaiser.

90. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 February 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

91. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Rebecca Margetts declared a Personal Interest in item 95 - 222603 St Crispins School, London Road, Wokingham, RG40 1SS, on the grounds that she was a governor at Nine Mile Ride School which was part of the Circle Trust, which St Crispin's also belonged to.

Andrew Mickleburgh declared a Personal Interest in item 94 – 223604 The Emmbrook School, Emmbrook Road and item 95 22603 St Crispins School, London Road, on the grounds that he was the Chair of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee which included oversight of education provision. He stated that he came to this meeting with an open mind and would consider all evidence prior to making a judgement on the applications.

92. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

There were no applications to be withdrawn or deferred.

93. APPLICATION NO.222367 - LIBRARY PARADE, CROCKHAMWELL ROAD, WOODLEY

Proposal: Full application for the proposed creation of a mixed-use building consisting of the retention of the existing 3 no. retail stores at ground floor level and the addition of 16 no. apartments on new first, second and third floor levels, including the erection of three and four storey rear extensions with associated car parking, cycle and bin stores, following partial demolition of the existing building.

Applicant: Mr Hardeep Hans

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 21 to 89.

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

- Clarification that the correct CIL rate for 2023 was £500.29 index linked.
- Clarification of points raised by Councillor Boyt during the February Committee meeting regarding amenity space, internal amenity space, clarification around accessible units, parking provision, heating and extraction units and retail units.
- Briefing note from the applicant's consultant;

Michaela Dalton spoke in objection to the application. Michaela commented that she was the owner of Woodley Pets whose service area was at the rear of Library Parade, opposite the proposed site. She stated that the application would have an impact on this already congested, high traffic area. There was already a limited turning circle for HGVs, and many reversed back from the Headley Road due to the fencing. Michaela stated that already unauthorised vehicles were using the existing parking space, which was difficult to police. She felt that the application offered insufficient parking provision, with 8 spaces for 16 apartments, only 31% of any incoming residents. She commented that whilst they were being marketed as being without parking, the same was the case for the flats above Lidl, and every resident had a car. Michaela also questioned what provision was being made for the overflow of retail staff who would no longer be able to park in the development site, and also during the construction period when contractors would be on site.

Bruce Chappell, resident, spoke in objection to the application. Bruce stated that he lived with his daughter in one of the flats above the Lidl building, directly opposite Library Parade. He raised concerns regarding privacy for himself and his daughter, the close proximity of the proposed site, the potential for sunlight to his property to be blocked, and the fact that he felt that the proposal was not in keeping with surrounding area. Bruce commented that he had offered for officers to come and see the proposed site from his flat to assess the impact, but that this had not been taken up. He had also been unaware of the Members site visit. Bruce went on to question what measures would be taken to ensure that residents were not impacted by noise pollution from the plant equipment which was to be situated on the roof at the highest point. In addition, he questioned plans in place during construction. During the warmer months his balcony and windows were often open, and he had concerns regarding the potential impact of dust, noise and chemicals, and the impact on privacy.

Paul Butt, agent, spoke in support of the application. Paul stated that the distance between Sandford Court and the proposed dwellings was within planning guidelines. The separation distance was nearly 11 metres across Library Parade. He commented that Mr Chappell lived in the western most of the two flats opposite. Proposed Unit 14, opposite, would have two bedrooms with two internally shuttered bedroom windows. Paul advised the Committee that the applicant was willing to relocate the living room window to Unit 13. He emphasised that Planning Practice Guidance allowed for a condition to modify plans as the application would not be substantially different. With regards to concerns raised by objectors to the application around traffic issues in the service yard, Paul highlighted that the Highways Officer had anticipated a significant reduction in traffic generation with the proposed residential use compared to the existing office use.

Shirley Boyt, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. She thanked Officers for partly addressing issues that she had previously raised. However, with regards to the location of the wheelchair accessible apartments the distance from the lift to the apartments was 17 metres but the disabled parking bays were at the furthest point from the lift at around 22 metres. She asked that parking be reconfigured so that the disabled bays were adjacent to the lift entrance, and the needs of wheelchair users be taken into consideration with the design of the lift lobby doors. Shirley noted that the apartments were to be marketed as car free and commented that whilst this worked well in large urban centres, Woodley was not a large town centre and only had decent public transport links with Reading. She referred to Sandford Court which had been cited as an example of car free living and stated that almost every resident owned a car. Those that could not afford season tickets had to park elsewhere. She felt that this would also be the case with the new development. Shirley stated that the existing air conditioning and extraction units did not have negative impact on residents even when running at full capacity during the summer months. She questioned the size and number of units that would be situated on the plant area on the roof and if there would be air source heat pumps. There could potentially be adverse noise impact on the top floor flats of Sandford Court, particularly in summer. Shirley noted that condition 12 called for a noise impact assessment, and questioned why this had not been requested earlier in the process, and what would happen should the noise impact assessment show noise levels to be above acceptable levels.

It was confirmed that a number of Members had attended a site visit or visited the site themselves.

Andrew Mickleburgh questioned which floors the accessible apartments would be located and was informed that they would be located on the first and second floors. Andrew noted that no objection had been received from the Fire Authority and sought clarification as to whether the plans viewed by the Fire Authority would have made it clear that the accessible units would not be located on the ground floor. It was confirmed that the Fire Authority had viewed the plans contained within the agenda. Andrew went on to ask about the offer from the applicant to relocate the window of Unit 13 and whether it would be beneficial to residents in the flats opposite. Helen Maynard, case officer, confirmed that the Committee should consider what was before it. Andrew questioned whether an informative that the applicant look at positioning the disabled parking bays as near as possible to the access points, could be included. Helen Maynard stated that the Committee should consider what was before it. However, the Highways Officer had had no objections to the parking arrangements. Whilst an informative was possible it was not binding on the applicant.

Stephen Conway thanked the case officer for the report and presentation. He sought clarification regarding separation distances as detailed in the Borough Design Guide. Helen Maynard indicated that the Borough Design Guide referred to a distance of 15 metres at the height of building in question. The proposed buildings would be 11 metres from the existing flats. However, the Design Guide also stated that in town centre locations or schemes in a more urban setting, distances were likely to be tighter, and could be under 15 metres. Stephen Conway was of the view that the proposed separation distance was so far under the 15 metres guidance as to prove an unacceptable relationship with the existing properties.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey asked whether personal evacuation plans would be brought in for the accessible apartments. Brian Conlon, Operational Lead – Development Management, stated that there were certain requirements for Fire Safety Plans for designated buildings which met a threshold in terms of the number or size of units. The application did not trigger this requirement. Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey went on to question whether in urban areas, separation distances of less than 15 metres were more common. Helen Maynard confirmed that this was the case, and that Woodley town centre was designated as an urban area. She stated that due to the height of Lidl and the surgery there would be a staggered relationship as opposed to a direct window to window relationship. Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey asked whether it would be possible to see into the windows of existing apartments opposite and was informed that it may be possible to look down to some extent in some cases.

Rebecca Margetts was of the view that an 11 metre separation distance was quite a departure from the Design Guide. She questioned why no information or photographs had been provided from the viewpoint of the apartments that would be located opposite. Brian Conlon stated that the relationship within the town centre precinct was not unusual for an urban area. There were examples in the Borough with similar relationships where ensuring the 15 metre distance was impossible due to factors such as street widths. Therefore, the Borough Design Guide allowed for an assessment of the character of the area. Discretion could be used to determine whether harm would be caused.

Wayne Smith stated that it was already a congested area. Shipping containers were currently taking up available parking spaces. In addition he commented that heat pumps could be noisy. Wayne expressed concern regarding the separation distances.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey questioned whether it was a requirement in the Borough Design Guide that parking was provided for apartments, and if there were acceptable noise levels within urban areas. Helen Maynard stated that 11 of the 16 units would be car free and the Highways Officer had not objected to this because of the sustainable location. There was no requirement for apartments to have parking provision. She emphasised that 'car free' did not preclude owners from owning a car but they would not have onsite parking provision and would have to park elsewhere. Condition 24 referred to plant noise condition. If noise levels were higher than that detailed in the condition, noise attenuation would be required.

Stephen Conway stated that units 14 and 15 would be 11 metres from existing apartments. Although there would be oblique relationships it would still be possible to see into rooms on the opposite side. The Borough Design Guide was silent on how far below the 15 metre separation distance standard could be considered acceptable. Stephen was of the view that the 11 metre separation distance was unacceptable and would give scope for overlooking. Stephen questioned whether parking issues could be taken into account. Rachel Lucas, Legal, commented that clear planning reasons needed to be provided should the Committee be minded to make a decision which was contrary to the officer recommendation.

Stephen Conway proposed that the application be refused on the grounds of the impact on amenity of the neighbouring occupiers as a result of proximity and overlooking. This was seconded by Wayne Smith.

RESOLVED: That application number 222367 be refused on the grounds of the impact on amenity of the neighbouring occupiers as a result of proximity and overlooking.

94. APPLICATION NO.223604 - "THE EMMBROOK SCHOOL", EMMBROOK ROAD, WOKINGHAM

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a two-storey 6th form centre with external stairway and disability ramp and a single storey office/admin extension with external disability stairway and disability ramp along with landscaping works following demolition of the existing admin block.

Applicant: Mr T Searle (Wokingham Borough Council)

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 90 to 130.

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

- Amended Condition 6;
- Amended Condition 18;

Nick McSweeney, applicant, spoke in support of the application. He stated that Emmbrook School had increased in popularity and was admitting more pupils than ever. There was a demand within the community for places at the school. The school had taken an additional 30 pupils over its admission number the previous year and would do so again this September. Additional pupils created operational pressures within the school. An office had been converted into a Sixth Form teaching area. The application would allow more teaching space and also greater independent study space for the older pupils.

Stephen Conway asked about relationships with existing dwellings. Officers indicated that the recommended distance for three storey buildings was in excess of 30 metres, which would be the case for 113 and 115 Emmbrook Road. The separation distance to 93 Emmbrook Gate would fall below 30 metres, however due to the positioning and orientation of the building, and the fact that the windows were proposed to be obscure glazed, it was felt that this would not have an unacceptable impact on the residents.

Stephen Conway proposed that the application be approved in line with the officer recommendation. This was seconded by Wayne Smith.

RESOLVED: That application number 223604 be approved subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 102 to 109, and amended conditions 6 and 18, as set out in the supplementary agenda.

95. APPLICATION NO.223603 - ST CRISPINS SCHOOL, LONDON ROAD, WOKINGHAM, RG40 1SS

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a single storey extension to the existing dining hall and a two-storey extension to the existing Sixth Form block to provide 8 no. new classrooms, plus a new canopy to the front entrance and a services and bin store, following demolition of the existing services and bin store.

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 131 to 186.

Andy Hinchcliff, applicant, spoke in support of the application. Andy stated that for September 2022 St Crispins had taken an additional 100 pupils to help local communities to gain secondary school places, and would take an additional 55 pupils in September 2023. Factors such as a bulge year moving from primary to secondary school, incoming families from Hong Kong, Ukraine and other areas, and new housing developments, increased pressure on school places. Andy commented that St Crispin's had opened in 1953 and the planned cohort had been 450. The dining space seated 140 people. The school now had 1400 pupils. Whilst the school had grown over the years the dining space had remained unchanged and was now inadequate in size. The new dining area would have greater capacity and allow the school curriculum to grow. Currently other areas such as the hall were used for pupils. Meaning it could not be used for Duke Edinburgh activities, sports, and exams. Andy stated that extending the Sixth Form would support the growth of the school and create an additional 8 classrooms.

Stephen Conway commented that the Built Heritage Officer had objected to the application as it was a listed building. He went on to state that whilst he was in favour of preserving listed buildings, he was of the view that any harm that the proposal may cause to the listed building, was outweighed by the improved facilities at the school and the additional capacity that would be created.

Stephen Conway proposed that the application be approved in line with the officer recommendation. This was seconded by Andrew Mickleburgh.

RESOLVED: That application number 223603 be approved subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 149 to 160.

96. APPLICATION NO.220987 - ROSE TOOP BOATYARD, WARGRAVE ROAD, HENLEY

Proposal: Full application for the proposed ground floor and first extensions to the existing buildings to provide additional workshop, gallery, and mezzanine level for dry storage along with recreational floorspace. Re-cladding of external walls with vertical timber boards. Creation of a river cutting to provide additional /replacement moorings.

Applicant: Mr Adam Toop

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 187 to 224.

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

- Details of 21 additional representations, 3 of which supplement an existing representation, and 18 which were new;
- Details of volume calculations;
- National Planning Policy Framework clarification;
- Clarification around local employment

John Merkel, Remenham Parish Councillor, spoke in support of the application. John was of the view that the proposal was uniquely suited to the activities that took place in Remenham. The development of the museum aspect was a long-term project and would have a positive impact on the local area. He stated that it was a small community and that

the activities would develop and grow. John felt that the proposal for refusal related to the question of scale, but he believed that changes would be incremental.

Adrian Gould, agent, spoke in support of the application. He stated that the proposal was not a redevelopment, but an extension. It would not be harmful to the Green Belt as it complied with NPPF Guidance that allowed for proportionate extensions to existing buildings. The extension would amount to a volume metric increase of 12%. Adrian commented that the proposal did not involve a change of use, and that the principal use would remain the storage, maintenance and repair of boats. The mezzanine would be used for complementary purposes which were ancillary and would not exist in isolation. Adrian emphasised that the proposed extension would enhance the design quality of the building, in a developed part of the river frontage. Whilst part of the central section would increase in height, it would remain in keeping with the height of neighbouring buildings. The proposed planting would provide landscape enhancement and significant biodiversity net gains. Adrian commented that the proposed moorings would not impact adversely on Green Belt openness and were different to a previous proposal.

Adam Toop, applicant, spoke in support of the application. He emphasised that the collection was of national significance and urgently required a suitable home and to stay together. Adam commented that the artefacts needed to be stored in a safe, controlled environment of modest scale. The proposed mezzanine would protect the items from annual flooding. Adam stated that the boatyard had been used to store, maintain, and moor boats for over a century, and the proposal proposed a continuation of this. Adam referred to local support for the application. He stated that the proposal represented sensitive, community focused improvements that valued and safeguarded the importance of the site.

Graham Howe, Ward Member, spoke in support of the application. He was also speaking on behalf of John Halsall, his fellow Ward Member. Graham stated that the proposal did not represent a change of use and that he believed that the proposals would improve the building materially. The exterior cladding would improve the look of the building and would match the nearby River and Rowing Museum. Graham commented that Henley and its councillors were also supportive of the application, as were many residents on the Wokingham side of the river. He went on to state that one of the key greenfield objections related to the proposed increase of the roof height by 1.5 metres. However, it would still be under the height of the neighbouring Henley Rowing Club. Graham commented that the applicant would be open to further conditions. Finally, Graham stated that the application would improve the Wokingham side of the river, and that the Council should support locals in a positive and engaging way.

It was noted that a number of Members had attended a site visit or visited the site themselves.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried how the Green Belt designation including the weighting given to this designation impacted by the existing use of the site as a boatyard. Helen Maynard responded that the existing building on the site had been granted planning permission in 2005 because a previous building on site burnt down. Usually a boat yard and industrial use was not something that would be allowed in the Green Belt, but in 2005 the fire meant that there were very special circumstances to allow this. A number of specific conditions had been put in place. Andrew Mickleburgh questioned whether the long term development as a community facility could be taken into account. Helen Maynard indicated that the application related to the redevelopment of the existing boatyard to

remain as a boatyard, but further applications could come forward in the future if required. Andrew went on to refer to the stated limited public benefit of the proposal, which was cited as a reason for refusal, and asked whether the preservation of the Rose Toop boat collection could be considered a public benefit. Helen Maynard commented that the application related to the use of land and was not a personal planning permission.

In response to a question from Wayne Smith regarding the calculation of increases in footprint in the Green Belt, officers confirmed that calculations were based on the original footprint. Wayne was of the opinion that the application was more compact than the original building, and would entail less encroachment than that set out in the refused application of 2017. He felt that the application would enhance the character of the area. In addition, Wayne asked whether a condition that the mezzanine be used in conjunction with, or was ancillary to, the Rose Toop boat collection, could be put in place. Helen Maynard stated that ancillary to the boatyard could also include features such as the toilets and kitchen facilities. Brian Conlon added that there was an existing use on a site, with a building that was being proposed to be extended in addition to other alterations. Fundamentally the use as a boat yard was not altering. The owner could use the mezzanine for boat activities if they wished. The boat yard was one planning unit. He cautioned against the use of personal permissions. Wayne Smith went on to state that based on the volumes, scope and size, he did not believe that the application would cause major harm to the location.

Officers advised that if a personal permission was put in place, once the property ceased to be occupied by the named person, or after a number of years, whichever occurred first, the permission would cease, and materials and equipment relating to that use, would be removed. It would be difficult to enforce the elements that would relate to any personal permission.

Stephen Conway commented that officers were recommending refusal on the grounds of inappropriate development in the Green Belt and the negative impact on countryside and landscape character. He commented that the site was previously developed land and there was an existing use as a boatyard in place. Stephen was of the view that the size of the proposed additional build was small, and was smaller than the original building which had burnt down and only a 12% increase on the existing building. He questioned whether the special circumstances that had been applied when the original building had burnt down, could be considered to still apply. Helen Maynard indicated that the raising of the height was considered to have an impact on the openness. Stephen also asked whether the NPPF referred to supporting businesses in rural locations. Helen Maynard stated that there was nothing specific in the Green Belt section of the NPPF regarding supporting rural businesses. It stated that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt was inappropriate and that the exceptions were agriculture, forestry, provision for facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, cemeteries, burial grounds, and allotments, providing the facilities preserved the openness of the Green Belt and did not conflict with its purposes. The activities of the boatyard were light industrial. Stephen queried whether the level of public support could be taken into account as a material planning factor. Helen Maynard responded that only those material considerations raised could be considered.

Al Neal felt that the cladding would help the building to fit in the surrounding area more and that the extension would not result in a disproportionate increase.

Chris Bowring queried whether an increase in leisure activities would constitute a change in use. Helen Maynard stated that this was outside of the application.

Wayne Smith commented that the overall increase in height based on the original building which burnt down, was 0.93 metres. The building would still be smaller than surrounding buildings. With regards to the impact on the countryside, he was of the view that the proposal would enhance the riverside, and that it was not detrimental to the Green Belt and riverside setting. Helen Maynard highlighted paragraph 149 g) of the NPPF which referred to having no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried whether people taking out boats constituted recreational use, and was reminded that the current use of the site was light industrial.

Stephen Conway was of the view that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding landscape and character of the Green Belt, or constituted inappropriate development. He suggested that should the application be approved, that the attachment of appropriate conditions be delegated to officers in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman. Brian Conlon commented that there was a standard list of conditions which would be applicable. An outstanding objection regarding the hedge planting remained which would have to be addressed with the applicant. Helen Maynard added that the applicant had agreed to the conditions from the Environment Agency.

It was proposed by Wayne Smith that the application be approved on the grounds that it did not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Based on the volumes of the previous building, the application would not have a detrimental impact on the landscape character. This was seconded by Chris Bowring.

RESOLVED: That application number 220987 be approved on the grounds that it did not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would not have a detrimental impact on the landscape character. The finalisation of conditions to be delegated to Officers in consultation with the Chairman and the Vice Chairman.

97. APPLICATION NO.230020 - LOCKEY FARM, SINDLESHAM ROAD, ARBORFIELD, RG2 9JH

Proposal: Full planning permission for the erection of 2 buildings for Class E use. (Retrospective)

Applicant: Mr Graham Adams

The Committee considered a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 225 to 264.

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

- Financial information provided by the agent in response to reason for refusal 2;
- Agricultural consultant comments;
- Officer analysis of financial report.

Jo Unsworth, agent, spoke in support of the application. She stated that the application was a retrospective application for two buildings which had been built by the applicant in order to economically support and diversify Lockey Farm. The Council's adopted planning policies and the NPPF stated that planning decisions should encourage the sustainable growth and expansion of rural businesses including through the provision of appropriate

new buildings, and specifically through the diversification of farming enterprises. Jo indicated that Lockey Farm had been in the same family since the 1940s. The owners had 180 sheep and helped to farm neighbouring Newlands Farm. Until recently they had kept cattle and were planning to do so again. They had previously kept chickens but had given this up in the last two years due to its financial unviability. Jo stated that Lockey Farm, like many other farms, was struggling, and was on the brink of ceasing altogether. This would also result in the closure of the café and the farm shop. The income streams provided by the office and shop buildings were vital to ensuring the continuation of the building. Jo commented that officers had recommended refusal due to inadequate justification in the financial information to show that the income from the two buildings supported the farm enterprise. Officers were of the view that the family did not actually farm, with only a proportion of the income coming from egg production, which was historic. Jo emphasised that this was a misunderstanding of the information provided and did not take account of the sale of Lockey lamb, eggs and goat meat through the farm shop and elsewhere. It was only through small scale diversification that the farming business remained viable. Jo commented that the officers report referred to the excess scale of the buildings and their encroachment into the countryside. She indicated that the buildings had been positioned so as to represent a modest extension of the courtyard and did not encroach into the countryside. Jo suggested that should the Committee require further consideration of the financial information provided, the application be deferred so that it could be discussed further with officers.

The Vice Chairman read a statement of support from Gary Cowan, Ward Member. Gary referred to the small family run farm shop which was supported by the local community, employed local residents, and used local suppliers. Gary was of the view that the Council should not miss any opportunity to assist local businesses in survival following the pandemic. He indicated that the Parish Council supported the farm and saw it as an important local business. The NPPF and other plans allowed for the support of projects in the Borough's rural communities such as the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses. Gary was of the view that the proposal represented a very small addition to the farm shop, and would not damage the countryside. In addition the National Planning Policy Framework stated that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural local environment, and supported the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops. Gary felt that the proposal would not have an impact on the viability or vitality of other retail in the locality. However, refusal of the application would likely mean the closure of the farm and the loss of employment. Paragraph 84 of the NPPF recognised that the site met local business and community needs in rural areas adjacent to existing settlements.

It was noted that a number of Members had visited the site either on the site visit or by themselves.

Rachel Lucas, Legal, indicated that there had been some concerns raised regarding the treatment of the allegations of unauthorised development. A plan indicating areas of authorised and unauthorised development on the site, had been presented at the request of Members. She advised that with regards to allegations of unauthorised use or development, whilst any planning application had to be considered in the wider context, given the allegations had not yet been determined, very little weight should be placed upon them.

Andrew Mickleburgh stated that the Committee was considering an application relating to two buildings. He sought clarification that the farm shop was located in a different building. Kieran Neumann, case officer indicated that the farm shop had recently been located into a smaller building on site which was not attached or associated to the buildings under consideration. Andrew Mickleburgh commented that the NPPF referred to support for businesses in the countryside. He asked for examples of the types of businesses that were considered appropriate and inappropriate, and whether the architects business located in one of the buildings would be included. Kieran Neumann stated that there were not specific restrictions in the NPPF, but CP11 outlined that the main form of development that was accepted in the countryside, was recreational. The two buildings under consideration were new buildings in the countryside and were inappropriate by their very nature. Brian Conlon added that the link to any diversification must be to the primary use of the land, which was agriculture. Andrew Mickleburgh went on to ask that if it could be demonstrated that the two buildings were vital to the financial viability of the farm business, and also the impact of the poor economic climate, whether these were material planning considerations. Kieran Neumann indicated that whilst a material consideration, only one of the four reasons for refusal related to the financial information.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey felt that farms that were supporting the local economy, should be supported.

Al Neal commented that the buildings were painted black and clad and could not be clearly viewed from the road. He sought further clarification regarding sustainable businesses in the countryside as referred to in Paragraph 84 of the NPPF. Kieran Neumann stated that officers were of the view that the proposals were not sustainable expansions and growth on the site. The uses of the buildings were inherently urban in character.

Wayne Smith commented that the farm shop was connected to the main use of the site, agriculture. The buildings that formed the application did not link back to the original use of the site.

It was proposed by Andrew Mickleburgh that the application be refused for the reasons detailed in Appendix 1 of the report. This was seconded by Chris Bowring.

RESOLVED: That application number 230020 be refused due to the proposals being located outside of Development Limits and being an unacceptable and unsustainable form of development for which inadequate justification exists; the absence of financial information to demonstrate that the proposed buildings and associated uses were economically related to the primary agricultural holding of Lockey Farm and were essential to its continued financial viability; harmful urbanising and industrialising impact on the visual and spatial amenities of the open countryside; and failure to protect and enhance the valued landscape and in particular the condition, character and features that contribute to the Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay Landscape.

This page is intentionally left blank