

WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

RESPONSE TO PLANNING APPLICATION 153125 - ELMS FIELD

1. **Play Area**

Wokingham Town Council (WTC) are pleased with the size of the proposed play area but request that a firm commitment be made at this stage to provide quality play equipment, the detail of which (including budget) will be decided following further consultation.

2. **Park**

WTC welcomes the decision to move the Wellington Road entrance back into the park but are still concerned that this, together with the proposed row of granite setts, is not sufficient to prevent young children from cycling out onto the busy Wellington Road. WTC would prefer to see a chicane formed of small attractive wrought iron structures.

WTC's preferred option for the maple tree (T65) is to leave it in place, build the road and services as planned and see if it survives. If it does not, or if removal of some of the roots compromises its safety, then it can be removed and a replacement planted elsewhere. The same strategy could also be applied to T60 (oak tree).

3. **Hotel, retail & car park**

WTC are pleased to note that:

- the hotel drop-off arrangements had been updated to include a lay-by on both sides of Wellington Road
- the junction of Denmark Street and Langborough Road will be upgraded to a full four-arm roundabout
- the design of the hotel sign will be subject to a planning condition

4. **Cinema & retail**

WTC appreciates the work that has been done to break up the roof line and blend the building in with the existing street scene in Denmark Street, and notes that the relevant key policies of the adopted Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery DPD have been met.

WTC are concerned that an open D2 Use Class on the Cinema might lead to an undesirable alternative use in the future and request that Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) look at ways of restricting the hours of operation, noise levels etc. with a planning condition.

5. **Residential (north west side)**

WBC has stated that, due to the costs of the scheme (including the significant financial investment in infrastructure such as the park, play area and public realm) and the values generated, there are insufficient funds to provide affordable housing. WTC is concerned that this cannot be verified and therefore requests that a summary of the conclusions of the independent financial appraisal be included in the report to the planning committee, together with a clear explanation of why affordable housing could not be provided.

WTC are concerned over the impact of plots 17 and 18 on the existing dwellings at 9 and 14 Albert Road, even though the proposed development complies with the relevant standards, and suggests that this could be mitigated to a degree by careful management of existing trees on the western boundary.

WTC agrees that the impact of the height of the proposed three storey dwellings overlooking the park, when compared with those adjacent to Langborough Recreation Ground, are not unduly overbearing.

Wokingham Town Council
Planning & Transportation Committee
29th January 2016