

Development Management Ref No 153125	No weeks on day of committee Extension agreed until Friday 29 April 2016	Parish Wokingham	Ward Ewendons (plus part of the Carnival Pool roundabout in Wescott and adjoining Emmbrook)	Major Development proposal:
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Applicant Location Wokingham Borough Council & Wilson Bowden Developments
Land Between Wellington Road & Shute End (Elms Field and Paddocks Car Park), Wokingham **Postcode** RG40 2QB

Proposal Full application for the erection of mixed use development for Town Centre uses comprising A1 shops including a food store, A2 Financial and Professional Services, A3 Cafes and Restaurants, A4 Drinking Establishments, A5 Hot Food Takeaways; Cinema (D2); 95-bed hotel (C1); 126 C3 residential units; re-configured town park; new and re-configured public car parking and partial closure of Elms Road (south) and provision of a new road to link Wellington Road and Shute End, as part of the regeneration of Wokingham Town Centre.

Type Full
PS Category 6 (other largescale major development)
Officer Emy Circuit

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Planning Committee on 30 March 2016
REPORT PREPARED BY Delivery Programme Director

SUMMARY

The application relates to 6.7 hectares of land located in Wokingham Town Centre, between the A329 Shute End to the north and the A321 Wellington Road in the south: it includes the site of the former Council Offices at Wellington House (demolished in February 2010), the Elms Field public open space (incorporating tennis courts, a play area and the former pitch and putt), the Paddocks car park and the car park and landscaped areas associated with the Council offices at Shute End (although not the offices themselves).

One of the key aims of the Core Strategy is the growth and renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre. This is necessary if the town is to continue to fulfil its role as a the only Major Town Centre in the Borough, meeting the needs of existing residents and new households, in particular those from the 4,000 new homes planned within the North and South Wokingham Strategic Development Locations (SDLs).

The current proposals for a mixed use, town centre development – anchored by a food store and cinema - around a reconfigured park are part of a wider strategy to deliver the planned growth and renaissance, which is set out in detail in the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2010) and a parallel Public Realm Design and Delivery Strategy (2013).

The application site is one of several opportunity sites identified in the Masterplan: others include the new railway station and station link road, which were completed in spring 2015; a retail-led, mixed use development for town centre uses including a new civic square at “Peach Place” the first phase of which has already been completed with the second larger phase due to commence in 2017, alongside a separate collaboration with Wokingham Town Council to carry out environmental improvements in the Market Place; and the Carnival Pool site which also has consent for a leisure-led, mixed use development in two phases, the first being a multi-storey car park to serve the wider town centre, also due to start on site during 2017. The application represents the next step in delivery of this wider strategy.

Consistent with the Core Strategy and Masterplan, the site is allocated by MDDL Policy SAL02 and SAL08 for a mixed use town centre and the key considerations are about how well the development fulfils the objectives of the Development Plan policies that seek to secure the growth and renaissance of the town centre, rather than the principle of development.

The application is before the Planning Committee because it is a major development proposal, promoted by the Borough Council as joint applicant.

The application was advertised as a major development but the advertisement omitted to mention that part of the site is in the Conservation Area and that the setting of listed buildings is affected. Hence, it has been re-advertised; the consultation period will end on 6 April 2016.

PLANNING STATUS

- Major Development Location (CP9/SAL08)
- Wokingham Town Centre (TB15)
- The part of the site east of the existing Elms Road is within the Primary shopping area (TB15)
- Primary shopping frontage (west side of Denmark Street and around the side of No 59) and Secondary shopping (through Alexandra and Efrtstadt Court and along the south side of Virgin Active)
- Elms Field and the Paddocks Car park are allocated for Mixed Use (SAL08) and Housing (SAL02)
- The Council Offices and land rear of 31-41 Denmark Street are within the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area (MDDL TB24) and the remainder of the site adjoins it (TB24). Parts of the site are also visible form the Langborough Road Conservation Area
- The setting of listed buildings - the Dukes Head and 31-39 & 47-53 Denmark Street, the Hope and Anchor, Station Road , the Parish Rooms, Reading Road and 4-16 Shute End (all Grade II listed except for 6 and 10 Shute End which are Grade II*)
- Archaeological Site (TB25) (Civic Offices, Shute End)
- Green Route (CC03) (Shute End, Denmark Street and the Carnival Pool roundabout)
- Green Route Enhancement area (CC03) (Wellington Road and Finchampstead

Road between Carnival Pool roundabout and the railway bridge)

- Public Open Space
- Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area 7km linear mitigation zone (CP08)
- Potentially Contaminated Land Consultation zone (northern and eastern part of the site)
- Flood Zone 1

RECOMMENDATION

RESOLVE to GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to:

- No new substantive planning issues being raised during the remainder of the consultation period which ends on 6 April 2016;
- Contributions to mitigate the impact of the development in terms of sport and the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area in accordance with paragraphs 32, 189 and 202 of this report and the Executive resolution on 18 January 2016 ; and
- the conditions below.

Conditions

Time for implementation

- 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 Purchase Act 2004).

Approved drawings

- This permission is in respect of the following drawings:

Drawing No/ Title
BNY-M1-20-0001-B00 North Zone - Proposed - Ground Floor Plan - Mixed Use Block
BNY-M1-20-1001-B00 North Zone - Proposed - First Floor Plan - Mixed Use Block
BNY-M1-20-2001-B00 North Zone - Proposed - Second Floor Plan - Mixed Use Block
BNY-M1-20-3001-B00 North Zone - Proposed - Third Floor Plan - Mixed Use Block
BNY-M1-20-4001-B00 North Zone - Proposed - Roof Plan - Mixed Use Block
BNY-M1-21-LL01-B00 North Zone - Proposed Elevations
BNY-M1-21-LL02-B00 North And South Zone - Proposed Internal Elevations
BNY-M1-21-LL05-B00 North Zone - Detailed Elevation 'A'
BNY-M1-21-LL06-B00 North Zone - Detailed Elevation 'B'
BNY-M1-21-LL07-B00 North Zone - Detailed Elevation 'C'
BNY-M2-20-0001-B00 South Zone - Proposed - Ground Floor Plan - Hotel And Foodstore
BNY-M2-20-1001-B00 South Zone - Proposed - First Floor Plan - Hotel And Foodstore

BNY-M2-20-2001-B00 South Zone - Proposed - Second Floor Plan - Hotel And Foodstore
 BNY-M2-20-3001-B00 South Zone - Proposed - Third Floor Plan - Hotel And Foodstore
 BNY-M2-20-4001-B00 South Zone - Proposed - Fourth Floor Plan - Hotel And Foodstore
 BNY-M2-20-5001-B00 South Zone - Proposed - Roof Plan - Hotel And Foodstore
 BNY-M2-21-LL01-B00 South Zone - Foodstore Block - Proposed Elevations
 BNY-M2-21-LL02-B00 South Zone - Foodstore Block - Detailed Elevation 'A'
 BNY-M2-21-LL03-B00 South Zone - Foodstore Block - Detailed Elevation 'B'
 BNY-M2-21-LL04-B00 South Zone - Foodstore Block - Detailed Elevation 'C'
 BNY-M2-21-LL05-B00 South Zone - Hotel - Proposed Elevations
 BNY-M2-21-LL06-B00 South Zone - Hotel - Detailed Elevation 'D'
 BNY-SA-00-0001-B00 Site Location Plan
 BNY-SA-02-0001-B00 Existing Levels
 BNY-SA-05-0001-B00 Demolition Plan
 BNY-SA-07-0001-B00 Planning Application Boundary Plan
 BNY-SA-07-0002-B00 Existing Land Use Plan
 BNY-SA-20-0001-B00 ground floor plan - proposed
 BNY-SA-20-1001-B00 First Floor Plan - Proposed
 BNY-SA-20-2001-B00 Second Floor Plan - Proposed
 BNY-SA-20-3001-B00 Third Floor Plan - Proposed
 BNY-SA-20-4001-B00 Fourth Floor Plan - Proposed
 BNY-SA-20-5001-B00 Roof Plan - Proposed
 BNY-SA-20-LL01-B00 Proposed Masterplan
 BNY-SA-20-LL02-B00 Proposed Storey Heights
 BNY-SA-20-LL03-B00 Proposed Levels
 BNY-SA-20-LL06-B00 Phasing Plan (for Illustrative Purposes Only)
 BNY-SA-21-LL01-B00 Site All Elevations 1-1
 BNY-SA-21-LL02-B00 Site All Elevations 2-2
 BNY-SA-21-LL03-B00 Site All Elevations 3-3
 BNY-SA-22-LL01-B00 Site All - Proposed Sections 1-1, 2-2 and 3-3
 BNY-SA-22-LL02-B00 Site All - Proposed Site Sections 4-4 and 5-5
 BNY-SA-95-0001-B00 Proposed Servicing Plan
 BNY-SA-97-0001-B00 New Elms Link Road Layout and Materials
 P001 Rev L Residential Layout Plan

P010 rev B Site Wide Ground Floor Plans
P011 rev A Site Wide First Floor Plans
P012 rev A Site Wide Second Floor Plans
P013 rev A Site Wide Third Floor Plans
P201 Rev G Block A Floor Plans
P202 Rev E Block A Elevations
P203 rev D Block B Floor Plans
P204 rev C Block B Elevations
P205 rev D Block C Ground _ First Floor Plans
P206 rev D Block C Second _ Third Floor Plan
P207 rev C Block C Elevations
P208 rev C Block D Ground _ First Floor Plans
P209 rev C Block D Second _ Third Floor Plans
P210 Rev D Block D Elevations
P220 Rev D Housetype B Plans & Elevations
P221 Rev D Housetype B Variant Plans & Elevations
P222 Rev D Housetype C Plans & Elevations
P223 Rev D Housetype M Plans & Elevations
P224 Rev C Housetype N Plans & Elevations
P300 rev B Refuse Strategy Plan
P301 rev A Car Parking & Cycle Strategy Plan
P302 rev B Boundary Treatments Plan
P400 rev B Plots 11-14 Block Plans and Elevation
P401 rev B Plots 15-18 Block Plans and Elevation
P403 rev B Plots 38-43 Block Plans and Elevation
P404 rev B Plots 73-76 Block Plans and Elevation
P405 Typical Gated Car Port Details
P406 rev A Contextual Section with No.9 Albert Road
P500 rev A Proposed Streetscenes
P600 Typical Garage Details
P601 Garden Room Details
P602 Garden Room Type 2 Details
P650 rev A Detail Elevation Bay Studies_LR

The development shall be carried out in accordance with 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.

Approved uses

3. Notwithstanding the provisions of Part 3 of the Second Schedule the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification):
- i) the ground-floor commercial units hereby approved for uses shall be used only for purposes within classes A1 shops including a food store, A2 Financial and Professional Services, A3 Cafes and Restaurants, A4 Drinking Establishments, A5 Hot Food;
 - ii) the cinema shall be used only for purposes within Class D2 assembly and leisure;
 - iii) the hotel shall be used only for uses within Class C1 hotels; and
 - iv) the dwellings shall be used only as class C3 dwelling houses

and for no other purpose unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: the application has been assessed on this basis and while a degree of flexibility is essential to the vitality and viability of the town centre, the flexibility that would be permitted under Class V of Part 3 of the Second Schedule the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 could lead to inappropriate development.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP13 and CP14, Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB15 and the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD.

Phasing

4. No development shall take place until a phasing strategy to include:
- i) the development to be delivered in each phase;
 - ii) the sequence of development; and
 - iii) how earlier phases of the development will be able to operate satisfactorily while later phases are still under construction;

has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved phasing.

Reason: to ensure comprehensive planning and delivery of the development and discharge of conditions. Also to demonstrate that early phases can function satisfactorily while phases are delivered.

Relevant Policies: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3, CP4, CP6, and CP14.

Levels

5. No development shall take place until a measured survey of the site and a plan at scale of not less than 1:500 showing details of existing and proposed finished ground levels within and surrounding the site (in relation to a fixed datum point) and finished roof levels has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The finished floor level of any buildings in areas identified as being at risk of surface water flooding or high groundwater table shall be set

300mm above surrounding ground levels so as to reduce flood risk from any overland source. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to ensure a satisfactory form of development relative to surrounding buildings and landscape and prevent increased risk of flooding.

Relevant policy: NPPF Section 10 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09, CC10, TB21 and TB24.

External Materials

6. Before any phase of the development hereby permitted is commenced, samples and details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the buildings in that phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: in the interests of visual amenity and to safeguard the character of the conservation area in which the property is located.

Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment), Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB 24.

Obscure glazing

7. Before any phase the development hereby permitted is commenced, a scheme identifying areas of clear and obscure glazing, together with details of the obscure glazing in that phase, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and work shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: to achieve an appropriate balance between privacy and surveillance and to prevent storage of items, in particular in stockrooms, adjacent to windows detracting from the appearance of the development.

Relevant Policies: Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP3.

Detailed Design

8. Before any phase of the development hereby permitted is commenced, detailed drawings (at scale 1:100 or greater) showing all elevations of the development in that phase and including materials, detailing of the elevations and reveal depths shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: in the interests of visual amenity and to safeguard the character of the conservation area in which the property is located.

Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment), Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB 24.

Plant zones

9. Before any phase of the development hereby permitted is commenced, details of plant zones shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and notwithstanding the provisions the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no plant shall be installed outside approved zones without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to safeguard the character of the development and area in which it is located.

Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment), Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP14, Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB24 and the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD.

Shop fronts and signage

10. All new shop fronts and signage shall be in accordance with a Shop Front and Signage Design Guide which shall be consistent with the advice in the Borough Design Guide SPD, June 2012 (or any guidance that supersedes it) and has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Guide shall remain in force for the lifetime of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing.

Reason: in the interests of visual amenity.

Relevant Policies: Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3 and CP14; Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB24 and the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD.

Green Infrastructure

11. Prior to commencement of development a detailed landscape scheme for the on-site public open space shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The detailed landscape scheme shall include children's play area of at least 0.25 hectares, a flexible and serviced space capable of providing a venue for major local events and demonstrate the qualitative improvements required to mitigate for the reduction in the overall area of on-site public open space as well as setting out how the proposals have been informed by public engagement. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: to ensure provision of appropriate public open space

Relevant Policies: Core Strategy policy CP3

12. i) Before the development commences, full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include:
- a) Scheme drawings;
 - b) Samples of hard landscaping materials;
 - c) Specification for tree pits and use of structural soils under paving;
 - d) Revisions to the servicing to the south of Virgin Active and north of the mixed use block to facilitate appropriate servicing while allowing successful retention

of tree T45;

- e) Means of enclosure;
 - f) Garden fences should be designed to provide access for hedgehogs (ES 9.6.18);
 - g) Design of gardens along the western boundary to ensure usability under tree canopies and reduce future pressure for work to retained trees;
 - h) Gates, bollards or other means of controlling access required to manage access to and servicing of the site as required by;
 - i) Way-finding signage;
 - j) External lighting (other than illuminated signage which is controlled under advertisement regulations);
 - k) Power, water distribution points and drainage to facilitate external events;
 - l) vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas
 - m) minor artefacts and structures including street furniture;
 - n) cycle parking; and
 - o) phasing of implementation if relevant.
- ii) 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.
 - iii) 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.
 - iv) 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.
 - v) The means of controlling access to the site shall be erected in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation of any part of the development (other than existing commercial units which are retained and continue to trade during the redevelopment) and retained thereafter. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no other gates, barriers or other means of controlling access shall be erected without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: in the interests of visual amenity and to ensure that the new civic space fulfils its role in the renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3, CP6 and CP14; Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03, TB21 and TB24 and the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD.

13. 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 CP14; Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21 and the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD.

14. a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until an Arboricultural Method Statement and Scheme of Works which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent to the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. No development or other operations shall take place except in complete accordance with the details as so-approved (hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme).
- b) No operations shall commence on site in connection with development hereby approved (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) until the tree protection works required by the Approved Scheme are in place 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 in writing 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 CP14; Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21 and the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD.

15. Before the development commences a landscape management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities, timescales and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas, other than privately owned, domestic gardens, 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 CP14; Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21 and the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD.

Access and servicing

16. Before development commences, detailed design of the road, footpath and cycle path networks within the development and the phasing of their delivery shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority access shall be provided in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure high quality, accessible development that is properly integrated with the primary shopping area and able to fulfil the objectives established by Core Strategy Policy CP14 and the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD, in accordance with these policies and also Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3, CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC03.

17. No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until a Servicing Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Servicing Management Plan shall include details of both physical and management measures for controlling deliveries in order to avoid disturbance to residents within and near to the development and conflict between delivery/service vehicles and other users of the site. In any case no deliveries shall be taken in or dispatched from the dedicated hotel and food store service yard outside the hours of 06:00-00:00 Monday to Saturdays and 08:00-19:00 on Sundays and at no time on Bank or Public holidays; and no servicing shall take place elsewhere on the site outside the hours of 07:00-10:00 Monday to Saturday and at no time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard residential amenity, pedestrian safety, highway safety and convenience and the character and amenity of the town centre generally.

Relevant Policies: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3, CP6, CP14; Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC06 and TB20; and the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD.

18. No building shall be occupied until refuse and recycling storage facilities have been provided in accordance with the approved details. These facilities shall be permanently retained and used for no purpose other than the temporary storage of refuse and recyclable materials.

Reason: to ensure the efficient collection of waste materials whilst avoiding highway obstruction and loss of visual amenity, in the interests of a functional development, the character of the area, highway safety & convenience and the quality of the pedestrian environment.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC04.

Car parking, turning and servicing

19. No building hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until the vehicle parking, turning and servicing space to serve it has been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The vehicle parking and turning space shall be retained and maintained in accordance with the approved details and the parking space shall remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times and the turning space shall

not be used for any other purpose other than vehicle turning.

Reason: to provide adequate vehicle parking and turning space 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.

Control of parking

20. The development shall not be occupied until measures have been put in place to manage the use of:

- i) The 89 space shoppers' car park;
- ii) the unallocated and visitor parking along the New Elms link Road; and
- iii) the two drop-off bays south of the Hotel on Wellington Road

In accordance with details that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the parking provision fulfils its intended purpose

Relevant Policies: Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC07

21. Before development is commenced details of provision for charging electric vehicles shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and provision shall be made in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: to support the use of sustainable travel.

Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

22. Before any phase of the development hereby permitted is commenced details of measures (underground ducting etc.) to facilitate possible future installation of information systems such as Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) within public car parks within the phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and provision shall be made in accordance with the approved details before the car parking comes into use.

Reason: in the interests of good traffic management.

Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

Cycle storage

23. Before any phase of the development hereby permitted is commenced, details of the design and fit out of the cycle storage within that phase, including the means of shelter where relevant, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include:

- a) Consideration of options for additional short-stay visitor cycle parking close to the

entrance of the hotel and the flats above commercial units;

- b) Shelter for a proportion of the town centre, visitor cycle parking;
- c) Details of lifts where there are required to gain access to the cycle storage
- d) Review of the design of store for the hotel; and
- e) Means of access to domestic cycle stores where they are behind electronically controlled gates.

Cycle storage shall be provided in accordance the approved details before occupation of the development it is to serve and shall be permanently retained in the approved form for the parking of bicycles and used for no other purpose.

Reason: to ensure provision of secure sheltered cycle storage, to support the use of sustainable travel.

Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

24. Before any phase of the development hereby permitted is commenced details of shower and changing facilities to support sustainable travel as indicated in the Transport Assessment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and provision shall be made in accordance with the approved details before first occupation of the development it is to serve unless alternative phasing forms part of the approved details.

Reason: to support the use of sustainable travel.

Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

Trolley management measures

25. Before the food store opens for business trolley management measures shall be put in place in accordance with details that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the measures shall remain in place for so long as the use continues.

Reason: in the interests of highway safety and visual amenity

Relevant Policies: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6.

Construction Environmental Management Plan

26. No development, including any demolition, shall take place until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) based on the submitted Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP) (Appendix 15.1 Environmental Statement Vol1 AECOM November 2015) has been submitted by the principle contractor and approved in writing by Local Planning Authority. In addition to the issues identified in the Outline CEMP the document shall include:

- i) parking provision for site operatives and visitors;
- ii) provision for loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- iii) provision to prevent queueing outside the site;

- iv) storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- v) the erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate;
- vi) measures to prevent deposit of mud on the highway;
- vii) provision for servicing of adjacent commercial units which are to continue to trade during the redevelopment;
- viii) dust control;
- ix) best practice methods for use and storage of chemicals;
- x) control of noise and vibration;
- xi) measures to avoid harm to the existing hedgehog population (ES para 9.6.16); and
- xii) routeing of construction traffic.

The Principal Contractor shall ensure compliance with the approved CEMP for the duration of construction phase

Reason: in the interests of highway safety and convenience and to minimise the impact on the amenity of local residents arising from dust, emissions and noise during the construction phase.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

Hours of construction

27. No work, including deliveries or removal of waste relating to the construction of the approved development, including works of demolition or preparation prior to building operations, shall take place other than between the hours of:
- i) 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday; and
 - ii) 08:00 and 13:00 Saturdays; and
 - iii) at no time on Sundays or Bank or National Holidays; except for
 - iv) individual operations which cannot reasonably be undertaken within the construction working hours defined above and have been notified to the Local Planning Authority (including details of the nature extent and timetable for the works) at least two weeks in advance and agreed in writing (by exchange of letter).
 - v) Where works are agreed by the LPA under iv), residential properties within an identified zone that has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority shall be given written notice at least one week in advance of the works taking place. The notification shall include details of the nature, extent and timetable for the works and telephone number that the party responsible the works can be contacted on for the duration of the works.

Reason: To protect the occupiers of neighbouring properties from noise and disturbance outside the permitted hours during the construction period.

Relevant Policies: Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC06.

Protection of amenity during operation: noise

28. No development shall take place until a further assessment of road traffic noise currently predicted to affect residential properties at the northern end of the proposed Elms Link Road, and depending on the outcome of the assessment, details of noise mitigation measures to protect dwellings from road traffic noise shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the new road becomes operational.
- Reason: The Environmental Impact Assessment indicates that there may be an adverse impact on 10 & 11 Hulbert Gate due to road traffic noise, but does not fully account for existing traffic in Shute End. An additional assessment is needed to establish the need for noise mitigation and measures as necessary to protect residential amenity of occupants.*
- Relevant policy: NPPF Section 11 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment), Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.*
29. No phase of development containing dwellings shall take place until a scheme for protecting the dwellings within that phase (including external private amenity areas) from external noise has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority: no dwelling shall be occupied until the measures required to protect the amenity of its occupants have been installed in accordance with the approved details.
- Reason: to ensure satisfactory noise attenuation measures (in terms of glazing and ventilation) are installed in the interests of residential amenity.*
- Relevant policy: NPPF Section 11 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment), Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.*
30. No development shall take place within the phase containing the cinema until:
- i) a noise survey (to BS7445 or other such standard acceptable to the local planning authority) to determine noise levels in the vicinity of the proposed cinema;
 - ii) written details and calculations showing the likely impact of noise for the proposed cinema; and
 - iii) a scheme of works or other such steps as may be necessary to minimise the effects of noise from the proposed cinema
- have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before first use of the building as a cinema or for any other use within class D2 assembly and leisure.
- Reason: To safeguard residential amenities.*
- Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC06.*
31. No customer shall be permitted on any Class A3 restaurant and cafe, A4 drinking establishments or A5 hot food takeaways premises hereby permitted outside the hours of 7:00 and 24:00. No customer shall be permitted to use outside areas ancillary to the use of the premises and doors and windows shall be kept shut outside the hours of 07:00 and

23:00.

Reason: To safeguard residential amenities

Relevant Policies: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP14 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

32. Before any phase of the development hereby permitted is commenced a noise attenuation scheme shall be submitted for the Class A premises within that phase and the approved measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before first occupation of any of the Class A premises within that phase and be retained thereafter.

Reason: To safeguard residential amenities.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP14 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

33. Noise emitted from externally mounted plant and equipment shall not at any time exceed a level 5dB below the existing background level (LA90) (10dB if there is a tonal element) when measured at 1m from the facade of the nearest noise sensitive location.

Reason: To safeguard residential amenities.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP14 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

Ventilation and Odour Control

34. Before any phase of the development hereby permitted is commenced, a ventilation strategy for that phase, to include fume extraction, mechanical ventilation and filtration equipment, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall include:

- i) details of the controls to be put in place to minimise odour from Class A3 cafés and restaurants, A4 drinking establishments and A5 hot food takeaways within the phase;
- ii) details of any external air conditioning/heating equipment;
- iii) specification of proposed equipment;
- iv) routing of ducting which should as far as possible be within the building envelope; and
- v) provision for extraction equipment to be installed at a later date in units that are first occupied for A1 shop or A2 financial and professional services use.

The approved strategy shall be implemented in full before first occupation of any development within that phase and the equipment shall thereafter be retained, operated and maintained in its approved form and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations for so long as the use hereby permitted remains on site.

Reason: to minimise the impact on the amenity of local residents (new and existing) arising from odour from commercial kitchens and other commercial operations. Also to ensure that the installation of the equipment does not detract from the quality and appearance of the development.

Relevant Policies: Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3 and CP14; Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC06 and TB24 and the Wokingham Town Centre

Masterplan SDP.

Lighting

35. No external lighting shall be installed other than in accordance with details that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. External lighting shall be designed so as not to cause disturbance to residents of existing and proposed residential dwellings.

Reason: To protect existing and future residents from light nuisance.

Relevant Policies: Wokingham Borough Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP7.

Contamination & Ground Gas

36. Prior to the commencement of development (or such other date or stage in development as may be agreed in writing with the local planning authority), the following components to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site shall each be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the local planning authority:

- 1) A preliminary risk assessment which has identified:
 - All previous uses
 - Potential contaminants associated with those uses
 - A conceptual model of the site indicating sources, pathways and receptors
 - Potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site.
- 2) A site investigation scheme, based on (1) to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off site.
- 3) The results of the site investigation and detailed risk assessment referred to in (2) and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken.
- 4) A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in the remediation strategy in (3) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.

Any changes to these components require the express written consent of the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: The proposed site is underlain by the Bagshot Formation (Secondary A Aquifer) and in places River Terrace Deposits (Secondary A Aquifer). The Bagshot Formation and River Terrace Deposits are isolated above the London Clay and streams that flow from these aquifers likely connect to the Emm Brook, designated as 'main river'. Therefore, we need to protect the groundwater in these aquifers from historic contamination.

Elevated trichloroethylene (TCE) has been identified in groundwater (borehole CP17) down hydraulic gradient of a former printing works (on Denmark Street) within the north east part of Area 2b of this development. We agree with AECOM's recommendation that a supplementary investigation (including shallow groundwater monitoring) should be carried out in the yard area behind this former print works.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 109 states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of water pollution.

Government policy also states that planning policies and decisions should also ensure that adequate site investigation information, prepared by a competent person, is presented (NPPF, paragraph 121).

37. No occupation of the site shall take place until a verification report demonstrating completion of works set out in the approved remediation strategy and the effectiveness of the remediation shall be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the local planning authority.

The report shall include results of sampling and monitoring carried out in accordance with the approved verification plan to demonstrate that the site remediation criteria have been met. It shall also include any plan (a "long-term monitoring and maintenance plan") for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action, as identified in the verification plan.

The long-term monitoring and maintenance plan shall be implemented as approved.

Reason : the proposed site is underlain by the Bagshot Formation (Secondary A Aquifer) and River Terrace Deposits (Secondary A Aquifer) that connect to the Emm Brook. We therefore need to protect the groundwater in these aquifers from historic contamination located in the vicinity of the former print works on Denmark Street.

This is sought in accordance with NPPF paragraph 109 which states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of water pollution.

38. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until such time as a scheme to dispose of surface water that ensures that soakaways are not constructed into contaminated land has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved. Reason 3 The proposed site is underlain by the Bagshot Formation (Secondary A Aquifer) and River Terrace Deposits (Secondary A Aquifer) that connect to the Emm Brook. We therefore need to protect the groundwater resources in these aquifers from mobilisation of historic contamination located in the vicinity of the former print works on Denmark Street.

Use of soakaways should be avoided in the area of the former print works located on Denmark Street and in the area where any plume of contamination is identified.

NPPF paragraph 109 states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of water pollution.

Unless otherwise agreed by the local planning authority, development other than that required to be carried out as part of an approved scheme of remediation must not commence until conditions A to D have been complied with. If unexpected contamination is found after development has begun, development must be halted on that part of the site affected by the unexpected contamination to the extent specified by the Local Planning Authority in writing until condition D has been complied with in relation to that contamination.

A SITE CHARACTERISATION

An investigation and risk assessment, in addition to any assessment provided with the planning application, must be completed in accordance with a scheme to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site. The contents of the scheme are subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons and a written report of the findings must be produced. The written report is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The report of the findings must include:

- (i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;
- (ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:
 - a) human health
 - b) property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes,
 - c) adjoining land
 - d) groundwaters and surface waters
 - e) ecological systems
 - f) archaeological sites and ancient monuments.
- (iii) an appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option(s)

This must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of land Contamination CLR 11

B SUBMISSION OF REMEDIATION SCHEME

A detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment must be prepared, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, timetable of works and site management procedures. The scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

C IMPLEMENTATION OF APPROVED REMEDIATION SCHEME

The approved remediation scheme must be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of development other than that required to carry out remediation, unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority must be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the remediation scheme works. Following completion of measures in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report (referred to in PPS23 as a validation report) that demonstrates the

effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

D REPORTING OF UNEXPECTED CONTAMINATION

In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of condition A, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with the requirements of condition B, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with condition C.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other off-site receptors in accordance with policy

Relevant policy: NPPF Section 11 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment) and Core Strategy policies CP1 & CP3.

39. No development shall take place until a further Ground Gas Investigation and Risk Assessment has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Should a risk from gas be identified, the Assessment shall include a scheme of works to mitigate the effect of gas (including phasing of delivery) and development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme. In any case, no building shall be occupied and the use of land shall not commence until the measures required to protect it have been implemented.

Reason: to ensure that any contamination of the site is identified at the outset to allow remediation to protect existing/proposed occupants of property on the site and/or adjacent land.

Relevant policy: NPPF Section 11 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment) and Core Strategy policies CP1 & CP3.

Archaeology

40. No development, other than demolition to ground level, shall take place until:
- i) the exploratory archaeological work as set out in the 'Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Trial Trenching' prepared by URS and dated November 2014 (or a comparable scheme that has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority) has been implemented; and
 - ii) a programme of archaeological mitigation resulting from the exploratory archaeological work has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The programme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details; and
 - iii) a programme for post-excavation assessment, analysis, reporting, publication and archiving has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning

Authority. The programme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

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

Ecology

41. Prior to commencement of development a detailed scheme to maintain or enhance the ecological permeability of the site (especially with regard to reptiles, amphibians and hedgehogs) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority for that sub phase of the development. The mitigation and contingency measures contained within the plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plan unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: to ensure the ecological impacts of the development are appropriately mitigated.

Relevant Policies: Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policy CP7 and MDDL Policy TB23.

42. Before felling of any trees identified as having high or moderate bat roost potential the trees shall be inspected by a suitably qualified ecologist. Should any bats or evidence of bats be found, all works must stop immediately and an ecological consultant or the Council's ecologist contacted for further advice before works can proceed. All contractors working on site should be made aware of the advice and provided with the contact details of a relevant ecological consultant.

Reason: to ensure appropriate protection of bats which are a protected species.

Relevant Policies: Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policy CP7 and MDDL Policy TB23.

43. Prior to commencement of development a detailed Non-Native Invasive Species Management Plan (in accordance with the mitigation, contingency and enhancement measures contained within the submitted Elms Field, Wokingham - Environmental Statement (AECOM Environment, November 2015) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: to control non-native invasive species.

Relevant Policies: Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policy CP7 and MDDL Policy TB23.

44. No development shall take place until a scheme of wildlife enhancements consistent with the proposals in the Environmental Impact Assessment and including detailed proposals has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details for each phase shall be implemented in full before first occupation of any building within that phase unless a phased programme of installation has first been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: to secure wildlife enhancements

Relevant Policies: Core Strategy Policy CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB23.

45. Removal of trees and other vegetation shall be outside the active bird nesting season (March to August inclusive) unless the vegetation has been checked by a suitably experienced ecologist immediately prior to its removal. If an active bird's nest is recorded, a five metre buffer shall be set up around the nest and no works to the vegetation supporting the nest will take place until the ecologist has confirmed that the young birds have fledged and the nest is no longer active, after which the vegetation can be removed.

Reason: To ensure appropriate protection of nesting birds during development

Relevant Policies: Core Strategy Policy CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB23.

Drainage

46. Development shall not commence until details of the drainage have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and no part of the development shall be occupied until the drainage to serve it has been provided in accordance with the approved details. The submitted details shall include:
- a) all components of the proposed drainage system including dimensions, locations, gradients, inverts and cover levels with drawings as appropriate;
 - b) full calculations demonstrating the performance of the system, including the proposed permeable paving and swales; and
 - c) phasing of delivery as necessary; and
 - d) achieve discharge rates in accordance with the Elms Field Surface Water Drainage Strategy November 2015.

Reason: to prevent increased flood risk.

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.

47. Prior to commencement of the development full details of the proposed Rain Gardens and Swales including sizes, locations, planting schedules, construction specification and phasing of development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and work shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details .

Reason: to prevent increased flood risk.

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.

48. Prior to commencement of development, a further period of groundwater monitoring shall be undertaken to demonstrate the depth of the seasonally high groundwater table and a report of the monitoring together with details of the foundation design to demonstrate that groundwater will not be displaced off-site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: to prevent increased flood risk.

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

49. Before any part of the development is occupied details of the maintenance agreements for the development covering every aspect of the proposed drainage system shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and maintenance shall be carried out in accordance with the approved arrangements.

Reason: to prevent increased flood risk.

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

50. Development shall not commence until an impact study and foul drainage strategy, in liaison with Thames Water and detailing any site drainage works for each phase has been submitted to and approved by, the local planning authority in consultation with the sewerage undertaker. No discharge of foul or surface water from the site shall be accepted into the public system until the drainage works referred to in the strategy have been completed.

Reason: the development may lead to sewage flooding; to ensure that sufficient capacity is made available to cope with the new development; and in order to avoid adverse environmental impact upon the community.

Relevant Policies: NPPF and Core Strategy Policy CP1 and CC09 and CC10 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (Feb 2014).

51. Development should not be commenced until impact studies of the existing water supply infrastructure have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with South East Water (or other relevant authority). The studies should determine the magnitude of any additional capacity required in the system and a suitable connection point.

Reason: to ensure that the water supply infrastructure has sufficient capacity to cope with the additional demand

Relevant Policies: NPPF and Core Strategy Policy CP1 and CC09 and CC10 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (Feb 2014).

Sustainability

52. The dwellings hereby permitted shall meet internal potable water consumption targets of 110 litres or less per person per day.

Reason: The development site is located within an area of severe water stress as identified in The Environment Agency 'Areas of Water Stress – Final Classification (2007)'. This target, is beyond the current Building Regulations requirements, but is necessary due to the level of water stress and planned population growth in the Borough.

53. Prior to the commencement of development a scheme for generating at least 10% of the predicted energy requirement of the development from decentralised renewable and/or low carbon sources (shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented before the development is first occupied and shall remain operational for the lifetime of the development.

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, Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC05 & the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document.

Employment Skills Plan

54. No development shall take place until an Employment and Skills Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing and the approved Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Relevant Policies: Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB12.

55. Before development commences, detailed design the gabled east elevation of the rear of Retail Units 003 – 007 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning

Authority and the development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure high quality, development that is properly integrated with the area and able to fulfil the objectives established by Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3, CP6 and the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD, in accordance with these policies and also and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy.

Informatives

1. The development accords with the policies contained within the adopted / development plan and there are no material considerations that warrant a different decision being taken.
2. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received. This planning application has been the subject of positive and proactive discussions with the applicant in terms of:

- the impact upon residential amenity

The decision to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF is considered to be a positive outcome of these discussions.

3. You are advised, in compliance with The Town and Country Planning [Development Management Procedure] [England] Order 2010 that the following policies and/or proposals in the development plan are relevant to this decision:

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies:

- CP1: Sustainable development
- CP2: Inclusive communities
- CP3: General Principles for development
- CP4: Infrastructure requirements
- CP5: Housing mix, density and affordability
- CP6: Managing travel demand
- CP7: Biodiversity
- CP8: Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
- CP9: Scale and location of development proposals
- CP10: Improvements in the Strategic Transport Network
- CP13: Town centres and shopping
- CP14: Growth and renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre
- CP17: Housing delivery

Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policies

- CC01: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC02: Development Limits
- CC03: Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
- CC04: Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC05: Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks
- CC06: Noise
- CC07: Parking

- CC08: Safeguarding alignments of the Strategic Transport Network & Road Infrastructure
- CC09: Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)
- CC10: Sustainable Drainage
- TB05: Housing Mix
- TB07: Internal Space Standards
- TB08: Open Space, sport and recreational facilities standards for residential development
- TB09: Residential accommodation for vulnerable groups
- TB12: Employment Skills Plan
- TB15: Major Town and Small Town/District Centre development
- TB16: Development for Town Centre Uses
- TB19: Outdoor advertising
- TB20: Service Arrangements and deliveries for Employment and Retail use
- TB21: Landscape Character
- TB23: Biodiversity and Development
- TB24: Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas)
- SAL05: Delivery of avoidance measures for Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
- SAL08: Allocated Mixed Use Sites

Supplementary Planning Documents and other guidance

Wokingham Borough Council Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (June 2012)

Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (April 2010)

Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (May 2012)

Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (July 2013)

Planning Advice Note, Infrastructure Impact Mitigation, contributions for New Development

Wokingham Town Centre and Langborough Road Conservation Areas Study

National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

4. The recommendation in the road safety audit that the middle and eastern steps from the Terrace be removed would not be acceptable in conservation terms and the details submitted to comply with Condition 16 should have regard to this.
5. This permission does not convey or imply any approval or consent that may be required for the display of advertisements on the site for which a separate Advertisement Consent application may be required. You should be aware that the display of advertisements without the necessary consent is a criminal offence liable to criminal prosecution proceedings through the courts.
6. The Head of Technical Services 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.
7. Before development is commenced a licence MUST be obtained under s.177/ s.178 of the Highways Act 1980 with respect to any part of the development which overhangs the highway. A licence must be obtained from the Council's Legal Department at Shute End, Wokingham.

8. Given the conservation area setting and aspiration to a high quality development, the roofing materials to comply with Condition 6 will be expected to be natural materials; natural slate and clay tiles.
9. The main should contractor apply for 'prior consent' under s.61 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974. An application form is available on the Council's web site.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

SO/2012/1043	12 June 2012: Screening Opinion for development at "Peach Place" and Elms Field concluded the proposals constituted EIA development.
SO/2012/1044	19 July 2012: Scoping Opinion for an EIA for development at "Peach Place" and Elms Field
F/2013/2283 & F/2013/2284	20 December 2013: parallel applications for (re)development of Peach Place and Elms Field withdrawn prior to determination.
F/2012/0779 & F/2013/1400	February 2013 and June 2015: appeals against refusal of 2.5-storey residential development on land rear of 37-37 Denmark Street dismissed at appeal. Development of this site for residential purposes is appropriate in principle and would not prejudice the delivery aims of the Masterplan. However, the proposed schemes would have caused harm to the character of the Conservation Area and setting of the Listed building and would fail to mitigate infrastructure impacts.

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Site Area		6.7 hectares				
Land Use	Ground floor GEA	1 st floor GEA	2 nd floor GEA	3 rd floor GEA	4 th floor GEA	Total GEA
A1 food store	1,631m ²	-	-	-	-	1,631m ²
A1 shops	2,648m ²	-	-	-	-	2,648m ²
A2 financial & professional services						
A3 restaurants & cafés						
A4 drinking establishments						
A5 hot food take-away						
A1-5 Total	4,279m ²	-	-	-	-	4,279m ²
D2 Assembly and leisure (290 seat Cinema)	134m ²	1,026m ²	-	-	-	1,160 m ²
C1 Hotel (95 rooms)	950m ²	869m ²	869m ²	869m ²	301m ²	3,858 m ²
Ancillary plant	42m ²	183m ²	4m ²	-	-	229m ²
Total	5,405m²	2,078m²	873m²	869m²	301m²	9,526m²

C3 Dwelling Houses	Unit size	No.	%
Flats	One-bedroom	28	22%
	Two-bedroom	66	52%
	Three-bedroom	7	6%
Houses	Three-bedroom	9	7%
	Four-bedroom	14	11%
	Five-bedroom	2	2%
Total		126	
On-site car parking	Existing	Proposed	Net Change
Shute End	204 Including 7 disabled	95 including 6 disabled	-109 (-1 disabled)
The Paddocks	282 Including 9 disabled	124 including 5 disabled	-158 (-4 disabled)
Wellington House	81 Including 4 disabled	0	-81 (-4 disabled)
New shoppers car park	-	89 spaces (public (1.5 hours maximum stay))	+89 including 6 disabled
Hotel	-	2 disabled	+2
Total	567	308	-259 (-1 disabled) but see paragraphs 134-139 regarding overall provision

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Land Use and Transportation Team

No objection; the proposal is consistent with Development Plan policy (as set out in detail in the report dealing with the principle of development). Conditions are recommended to secure an employment and skills plan (Condition 54), new dwellings to meet the tighter Building Regulations optional requirement of 110 per person per day (Condition 52).

Suggests exploration of whether an increase in housing numbers could assist with viability and facilitate delivery of affordable housing (*Officer Note: A significant increase in the number of dwellings on the site could not be achieved without detriment to character and amenities or a more significant reduction in open space.*)

Landscape Officer

No objection subject to conditions to secure ensure successful retention of retained trees and additional landscaping to mitigate for the loss of the trees to be removed and to reduce the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development from sensitive locations around the site (Condition 11-15). Whilst in general agreement with the Environmental Statement there are aspects that have not been fully addressed/given sufficient weight. The main concern is the extent of tree loss and their role

in provided a wooded backdrop/skyline to the historic buildings in the conservation area, which needs to be balanced against the benefits of the scheme.

172 individual trees and 15 groups would be removed as a result of the proposals and the current landscaping proposals include 99 new trees and one translocation: there is scope to incorporate additional planting to mitigate the impact of the development and a number of specific opportunities have been identified which would allow additional planting to be incorporated without prejudicing the usability of the space (Condition 11-15). These include opportunities for planting within the residential areas to the north and west of the site

Due to the proximity of proposed garages it is unlikely that some of the trees along the western boundary could be successfully retained (*Officer Note: revised plans have been submitted to address this issue*)

Advice is given about the detailed design of the play area which is to be the subject of further consultation.

The reduction in the rooting area of T45 is likely to affect the long term health of the tree (*Officer Note: Condition 14 refers*)

Careful consideration will need to be given to the surfacing around T81 and T89 to ensure their successful retention. Also to the position of lighting along the new footpath and construction of no-dig surfacing where new paths cross root protection areas (*Officer Note: Conditions landscaping 12 and AMS 14 refer*)

Conservation
Officer

Overall the scheme will deliver great benefits to the town. However, there are areas where the loss of parkland character and replacement with buildings of this scale, will affect the setting of some listed and unlisted buildings and character of parts of the conservation area and more could more could be done to mitigate the impact through additional landscaping to filter views and soften the appearance of the new buildings. These are around the junction of Langborough Road/Denmark Street and area immediately to the north; westerly views out of Langborough Road; northerly views from south of the Wellington Road roundabout and loss of some of the open character associated with The Paddocks car park. Careful consideration is necessary to balance the impacts of the scheme with the wider public benefits.

The design approach based on an analysis of elements of the existing townscape character is appropriate

The general emphasis on red brick broken up with render is welcomed but it would be better if some clay tiles could be introduced (Conditions 6 & 8 refer). Removal of the steps from the Terrace, as suggested in the Road Safety Audit, would be inappropriate. Condition 16 requires a scheme for improvements to be agreed.

The Council's

No objection subject to conditions (Conditions 5 and 46-49)

Drainage Advisor	
Access & Movement	No objection subject to conditions (Conditions 16-26)
Ecology	No objection subject to conditions to secure the ecological permeability of the site (Condition 41) a CEMP (Condition 26) and a non-native invasive species management plan (Condition 43).
Green Infrastructure	No objection subject to a condition to secure the detailed design and delivery of the proposed open space (Condition 11). The illustrative scheme demonstrates that the development can provide a smaller area of public open space of much higher quality that can accommodate both a significantly enhanced play area and the space required to host major events
Environmental Health Officer	No objection subject to conditions to control noise during construction and operation, odour, external lighting, air quality and to secure a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and contaminated land assessment and remediation as necessary (Conditions 26-39)
Employment Skills Broker	No objection subject to a condition to secure an employment skills plan (Condition 54).
Archaeological Advisor	No objection subject to a condition 40 to secure a programme of archaeological work.
Historic England (formerly English Heritage)	<i>"...do not wish to offer any comments"</i>
Natural England	No objection providing SANG and SAMM are secured and there is capacity and agreement with the landowner to use Rooks Nest Wood (<i>Officer Note: see paragraphs 186-189</i>). Consideration should be given to the impact on biodiversity and geodiversity, landscape character and local or national biodiversity priority habitats and species; biodiversity enhancements should be secured as part of any consent. (<i>Officer Note: see paragraphs 179-185</i>)
Highways England	No objection
Environment Agency	No objection subject to conditions to secure a contaminated land assessment and remediation as required and a scheme to ensure soakaways are not constructed in contaminated land. (<i>Officer Note: see Condition 38</i>)
Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust	No comments received
Sport England	No objection subject to sports provision secured through CIL and a contribution of £320,000 for replacement tennis provision at Cantley Park. (<i>Officer Note: see paragraph 31</i>)
Fields in Trust	No comments received
Thames Water	No comments received

South East Water	No comments received
NHS Wokingham CCG	No comments received
Crime Prevention Design Advisor	No comments received
Thames Valley Police	No comments received
Network Rail	No objection
Southwest Trains	No comments received
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue	No comments received
National Grid	No comments received
Transco	No comments received
Southern Gas Networks	No objection. Advise of the presence of Gas mains in the vicinity of the site and the need to employ safe digging practices when working in their vicinity. This advice has been forwarded to the applicant.
SSE Power Distribution	No comments received
Wokingham Town Council	<p>The Town Council are pleased with a number of aspects of the scheme but have identified a number of points that they would like to be given further consideration. Full comments are attached. In summary their outstanding concerns are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of sufficient measures to prevent children running out from the park into Wellington Road • Retention of Trees T65 and T60 with future replacement if necessary • Controls on the use of the cinema • Verification that it is not viable to provide affordable housing • The impact on 9 and 14 Albert Road (<i>Officer Note: the design of Block A and the adjacent houses has since been revised</i>)
Finchampstead PC	We have concerns about provision of an overflow carpark for the railway station once the Paddocks carpark is taken out of use. Inadequate parking spaces for the proposed foodstore. The designs are out of keeping for a market town. The proposed number of eating establishments particularly takeaways will have an impact on the environment, litter issues and antisocial behaviour.
Reading Borough Council	<i>"...Reading Borough Council raise NO OBJECTION to the proposal".</i>
Bracknell Forest Borough Council	<i>"Bracknell Forest Council does not wish to make any comments on this application"</i>
Wokingham District	Regret the need to fell the mature English oak trees (T12 and

Veteran Tree Association

T30), the mature London plane (T24) and the row of lime trees bordering Demark Street (T1, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8 and T10).

The Association appreciate that many of our comments have been responded to and are supportive of a number of aspects of the scheme:

- inclusion of a new stand-alone English oak, a stand-alone London Plane and several common lime trees, which in time will recreate a similar degree of high and medium quality trees;
- relocation of the Pride of India tree (T85) and retention of other trees recorded on the veteran tree survey (T45, T57, T68, T78 and T81);
- inclusion new elm trees to reflect the historic name of the area although the Ulmus 'New Horizon' proposed is a cross between the Japanese and Siberian elm, cultivated in America and has little historical reference, has an architectural form quite different from an English Elm and is not guaranteed resistant to Dutch elm disease. It would be preferable to use a potentially disease resistant variety of English elm, now available;
- inclusion of new elm hedges (wych elm, like English elm, is prone to Dutch elm disease as a tall tree, but is likely to be resistant if kept at hedge level); and
- the number/variety/mix of tree species that have been selected which reflect the local mix of trees found around Wokingham and are a suitable mix for the planned use.

The hedge along Wellington Road is of English elm, *Ulmus procera* which has been maintained at hedge height and not fallen prey to Dutch elm disease, so is a historically important source of English elm stock. At least part of this hedge should be retained and improved rather than replaced.

Provision should be made for monitoring the growth, health and maintenance of new planting, especially the 'New Horizon' elms.

Construction workers should be fully aware of protection measures for retained trees.

REPRESENTATIONS

Following the initial consultation 265 individual representations and one petition were received: 21 in support and 244 plus the petition either objecting in principle or raising concerns about specific aspects of the scheme. Respondents include the Wokingham Society and Great Langborough Resident's Association: both groups are positive about some aspects of the proposals but have significant outstanding concerns about others and their comments - for and against - have been included in the summary below.

Subsequently the design of some of the houses and flats on the western part of the site has been revised and adjacent properties (those who would be directly affected by the changes) have been re-consulted. This consultation ends on 29 March: one response has been received to date and any additional comments received will be reported at the committee meeting.

Responses to the revised plans consultation

The “tapering” of the gable and removal of most of the top level windows is an improvement but the development is still too high/too close (Wokingham’s standards are more liberal than elsewhere). It is difficult to visualise how the roof line may look and it could appear bulky, as if an extra storey has been squeezed in. Alternative (generally three-storey alternatives are suggested)

Existing vegetation will not mitigate the impact of the development and occupants would feel it necessary to carry out extensive new planting to protect their privacy.

Summary of the planning issues Support

Supporters are impressed with the new proposal; previous feedback has been taken into account and scheme addresses many of the previous concerns.

Regeneration is overdue; Wokingham has stagnated due to lack of investment during the last 30 years and the additional floorspace is needed; the development needs to go ahead now or people will take their custom elsewhere. Without it Wokingham will become a commuter dormitory and residents will socialise elsewhere. We need to evolve to ensure the vibrant town centre/ sense of community and small-town feel continues. The proposals are attractive, coherent, sensible and connected; the application strikes the right balance and is a good compromise.

There is little to attract people to the town at the moment but the application will broaden the town centre’s appeal/bring much need amenities/a better range of shops to draw people into the town centre.

There is support for the hotel and (smaller) supermarket (wrapped in other development) which will add choice.

The boutique cinema is excellent as there is little for people –especially young - people to do at the moment. (With the bar overlooking the park) it will add another dimension not offered by other towns/make it possible to walk to the cinema stay out in town afterwards. It should be a luxury venue to compete with Showcase Plus.

Given that it is difficult to get a table mid-week let alone at the weekend, more restaurants and cafés are supported and it will be an attractive location for them, on the edge of the park, away from traffic

There is support the housing around the park (with some reservations regarding scale and height); one of the reasons it is underused now is that it feels isolated and one writer avoids walking down Elms Road after dark for that reason; having more people around during the day and evening would make it feel safer and more useable. Since there more flats and houses have been built the town centre feels more alive during evenings and weekends.

Elms Field is currently uninspiring and, apart from the play area, is not well used except for when there are events. It is not fit for purpose (a view expressed by a representative of Wokingham Festival, Wokingham Open Air Cinema and Wokingham Walk). It is not well connected to the town centre.

Some open space will be lost but not as much as the previous scheme and the remainder will be turned the something that the community will actually want to use. It is well designed and will be capable of taking larger events which will attract people to the town centre. It will also encourage other groups to use the park for events.

Will open up a whole new part of the town all time, not only when there are special

events.

The new park looks lovely and the improvements to the seating and planting are welcomed. Defining areas within it will help with maintenance.

The position of the road in front of the houses contributes towards a feeling of spaciousness, enhanced by gaps between buildings, and means you won't have to cross it to get to events.

There is support for the design of the houses and not too much concern about the height of the buildings; there are similar examples not far away/Elms Field already has large buildings around it and given most people don't notice the scale of them they won't notice the new ones.

Consultation on the detailed design of the play area is welcomed; consideration should be given to enabling different age groups to play safely without conflict.

Town centre living is recommended because of the easy access to shops, public transport connections, doctors surgeries and sports facilities

The off-road parking seems well-planned and convenient, with allowance for 1-3 cars depending on the size of accommodation, and cycle and refuse storage will help keep the site uncluttered. The on-street parking is welcomed providing parking restrictions and speed controls are implemented.

Objections

The planning issues raised in relation to the current proposal are summarised below.

Petitions

A petition has been received from the Keep Elms Field Green Group (1,366 signatories at the time of submission):

We the undersigned residents of Wokingham, those who work here or are being educated here, do not wish to see building development on green space at Elms Field. We call upon Wokingham Borough Council to rejuvenate the green space and neglected facilities for the benefit of the local community and to regenerate Wokingham's brown field spaces with facilities to meet the needs and preferences of the local community, and to suit the scale and character of this historic market town.

The petition gave signatories the opportunity to submit individual comments which were submitted as a separate schedule and have been included in the summary of representations (there were 1,389 signatories at the time of submission but the petition was not included, only the list of individual comments)

The principle of development

The proposal is not as bad as the earlier one.

The application does not adhere to adopted planning policy and guidance.

Wokingham is currently rated as one of the most desirable places to live in Britain provides the best of town and country living; the development of Elms Field will damage its reputation. Elms Field should be kept as it is and promoted/enhanced as an asset

together with improvements to the existing town centre. All that is needed is a spring clean, fresh paint and some floral arrangements. Town is already overdeveloped and losing its character and community spirit.

There is no need for another **supermarket**, which will not be used as the existing ones (Tesco, Waitrose, Lidl, M&S, Morrison's and Sainsbury ten minutes away) are more accessible. The existing supermarkets are not full to capacity and home delivery is expanding as is the use of smaller convenience shops. If provided a new supermarket would be better located out-of-town/on the eastern side of the town to serve the new developments in North and South Wokingham which have no facilities. It will not be viable as Lidl has been more successful than anticipated. Unsure about Aldi as I don't think you can buy a weekly shop there. A limit should be put on the amount of non-food floorspace in the food store. (*Officer Note: see paragraphs 9-15*)

Some consider there is no need for a **cinema** when there are already cinemas in Bracknell, Winnersh and Reading; a cinema in Wokingham would be unlikely to be able to compete with these. Also better use could be made of Cantley and the Town Hall for showing films/to convert the Bingo hall in Easthampstead Road back to a cinema. Others support the idea of a town centre cinema and the proposed location, particularly if independently run (Everyman or Regal). (*Officer Note: see paragraphs 0-20*)

There is no need for a (budget) **hotel** of the size proposed. An hotel has been demolished recently and it could lead to the loss of the Cantley House Hotel. Budget hotels are predominantly used by groups of young people as a cheap place to stay after a night out which will lead to noise and disturbance. It would be better located on the park in Latimer Road/on Molly Millars Lane. It should be located on the Carnival Pool site/ in the leisure quarter in line with the Masterplan SPD, where it would be close to the new multi-storey car park. (*Officer Note: see paragraphs 21-22*)

The Council has accepted new housing on the basis that it will not affect the town centre so where will the new shoppers come from? Some consider there is a need for more **shops** but others disagree saying there are already empty shops in Wokingham/vacant premises are slow to let/a large number of charity shops and that online shopping is increasing. The application proposes a supermarket and cafés rather than shops. (*Officer Note: see paragraphs 1-15*)

The town centre will be too spread out/split and (shops and financial and profession services particularly) should remain focussed around the Town Hall/in the existing town centre. The market style, budget supermarket will reduce shopping in the traditional town centre, adversely affect traders in the town, in particular footfall in Peach Street which is already struggling. The proposed shops will end up as low-rent retail space. Thus the scheme will not help regenerate the town centre. The location of parking at Carnival Pool will also contribute to a 'two centre' town. (*Officer Note: see paragraphs 43-46*)

Attracting the right sort of retail will make the biggest difference. It would be good to see small individual shops; this depends on the letting strategy. How can the range of shops be increased when WBC can't control which shops there will be within the development? The choice of retailers is disappointing/a missed opportunity. Bracknell offers more variety, choice and quality and more upmarket retailers. Others question the need to attract chain stores which will make Wokingham like any other town and erode its market town character. (*Officer Note: 47-50*)

There is no need for any more cafés, restaurants, takeaways (which damage health and create litter) drinking establishments, (which damage health and create noise)

There is no need for more **housing**, particularly with the new homes planned in the

SDL's. This is included for financial gain and could be delivered elsewhere. (*Officer Note: see paragraphs 23-24*)

People want to make the town into another Marlow, Henley or Kingston on Thames or Reading, Bracknell (*Officer Note: the Development Plan and Masterplan Strategy builds on the town's market town character to provide an attractive shopping and leisure destination for local residents rather than to compete with larger centres such as Reading and Bracknell*)

A large (300 + seat) community hall would be an asset (*Officer Note: see paragraphs 0-19*)

Loss of public open space

Elms Field was given to the people of Wokingham in perpetuity as an open space (*Officer Note: this is a civil/legal rather than a planning issue and the application must be assessed on its planning merits*)

The remaining open space should be protected by covenant or other order (*Officer Note: this is not a planning matter; any future proposals would be assessed on their merits against planning policy at the time*)

It is rare to have a green space like Elms Field close to the town centre (which unlike many others in the borough is accessible without a car). The playground and park form a green lung/oasis, providing relief from the urban surroundings and are well used by people of all ages - young families, teenagers, dog walkers, and elderly people - as a place to play, meet friends or sit and relax without feeling crowded and see the sky.

The space is large enough to support events like fairs, which create a sense of community and economic benefit, the open air cinema and incredible edibles. (*Officer Note: see paragraphs 36-37*)

It is the last significant green space in Wokingham following the loss of the football pitch, Carnival Field and cricket club, tennis club and Martins Pool, is vital for physical and mental health and wellbeing, is irreplaceable and should be preserved for future generations. The reduction in size is contrary to Government policy that open space should not be built on unless shown to be surplus to requirements/is replaced close by, particularly at a time when more space/facilities are needed to meet the needs of an increasing population. It is Wokingham's equivalent to London Parks or Central Park in New York, which would not be built on.

The existing open space has not been maintained and needs to be updated but not reduced in area. Suggestions include restoring the Wellington House site to open space, more tables and chairs, an open air pool, reinstating the tennis courts and facilities like a basketball area and jogging track to promote health and fitness, hardstanding for children to learn to cycle and reinstatement of the pond at the southern end of the site. It shouldn't be necessary to go out of the borough (to Jocks Lane) to find good play facilities. (*Officer Note: the application must be assessed on its own merits regardless of alternative options*)

The figures in the DAS are misleading as the total existing area of 2.84 hectares does not include some of the smaller areas of green space and paths, whereas the 1.433hecare area of the proposed park incudes both. The play area would not be 40% larger; the setting of the existing play area has not been taken into account. (*Officer Note: see paragraphs33-35*)

Some accept that the development cannot be delivered without some tree removal and

that a strategy has been drawn up for replacement but are concerned about their care while they become established (*Officer Note: Condition 15 refers*)

The application indicates that WBC stepped in as the private sector schemes laced public/open spaces but this is the major problem with the current proposal

The loss of the pitch and putt should be mitigated in the same way as the tennis courts (*Officer Note: see paragraph 32*)

The comparable development at the Pavilions provided enhanced cricket facilities whereas WBC has offered Rooks Nest Wood (*Officer Note: the two are not comparable because the whole of the cricket club site was developed whereas, in this case only the tennis courts are being provided off-site. SANG has a specific purpose as explained in paragraphs 186-189 and is not intended to compensate for loss of on-site open space.*)

The Gorrick Plantation, which is believed to meet the SPA criteria is closer to the application site than Rooks Nest Wood and therefore it does not meet the SANG criteria. (*Officer Note: the proposals meet with the Thames Basin Heaths Delivery Plan requirements and Natural England has no objection.*)

Landscape

Loss of irreplaceable, good quality, mature trees - especially oaks – which contribute to the parkland type setting and are one of the defining features of Elms Field. They are also important to the character of the Green Routes. This will be detrimental to the character of the area and pollution levels, as the trees help clean our atmosphere and allow noise to travel further. The plain tree and oaks should be retained and a TPO placed on them. (*Officer Note: see paragraphs 56-57. TPOs are a matter of separate legislation*)

T65 (a sliver Maple) should be retained (without special road construction); it may survive and if not it could be replaced later (*Officer Note: Landscape advice is that the tree has structural issues in any case. It is currently in open ground and would be unlikely to survive the root severance and reduction in rooting area resulting from construction of the road and, therefore, it would be better to replace it as part of the comprehensive landscaping of the site.*)

New park design & maintenance

Some think the size and design of the play area is improved compared to the previous scheme but others consider the play area to be too small/smaller than existing and there is no provision for teenagers. The play area should be located away from the road and there should be a barrier to prevent children running out onto the road.

Increased traffic flow will decrease amenity of the park.

The reduction in the overall size of the space will prevent the park being able to accommodate community events. The outdoor auditorium has been dropped.

Surrounding buildings will be overbearing/overshadow the park making it dark. The amount of paths will reduce the sense of openness and it will change in character from a field to a municipal park.

The wildflower meadow and hedges will be too high maintenance. WBC has a poor record for maintenance in the town centre and other parks (weeding and emptying of dog bins). There is a lack of a plausible maintenance plan. If the Town Council take on the running costs but the Borough receive any income, how will the space be maintained?

The south-eastern part of the park should be kept free for everyday use

There should not be any charges for use of the park for exercise

Appropriate bins need to be provided to ensure dog owner collect faeces

An increase in the size/frequency of events within a smaller space would involve the park being fenced off restricting access for the wider public, including dog walkers who may drive to the SPA, the grass will be churned up, the fencing will be ugly and café trade will suffer

Safety, anti-social behaviour and crime

The application seeks to increase the night-time economy but does not include any lighting details; the lack of lighting will make the development feel unsafe at night particularly for women and encourage crime. (*Officer Note: This level of detail would not generally be provided at the application stage but would be secured by condition*)

The claim that natural surveillance will reduce anti-social behaviour is questionable as customers from bars and restaurants may spill out into the park. It is unreasonable to expect residents to provide security for the park when Wokingham Police Station is only open during office hours and the front desk may be closed. (*Officer Note: the concept of natural surveillance has a well-established, empirical basis in planning policy and relies more on the perception of being observed as a positive influence on behaviour than active intervention by occupants of buildings.*)

People in the new houses would be able to observe children using the play area unseen and unmonitored; this will make the play area unsafe.

Ecology

The proposals will result in loss of habitats for species including bats (the bat survey identifies the area as important for bat foraging and recommends retaining hedgerows and trees), hedgehogs, birds, insects, mammals, beetles and newts; has the impact of this been considered? The Masterplan SPD identifies opportunities to promote biodiversity through natural and semi-natural green space but the ES non-technical summary makes no mention of ecological improvements and the proposed hard landscaped areas will not mitigate for the loss of on-site habitats. (*Officer Note: see paragraphs 179-185*)

It is not explained how environmental damage could be off-set by spending money on Rooks Nest Wood. The SANG is 5km away and residents are unlikely make a round trip on foot, so are likely to drive adding to pollution. (*Officer Note: see paragraphs 186-189*)

Designs

The plans are better than those previously submitted but still fall short of what is acceptable

The town centre is dilapidated and falls short of the distinctiveness of other market towns that have a range of shops and a vibrant feel

Overdevelopment of the town centre

The proposed designs are soulless/bland/unimaginative/homogenous/generic/repetitive, monolithic blocks/without architectural interest and not in keeping with Wokingham's quaint, historic market town character and identity; the designs do not work well together. Inspiration should be taken from the good quality, older buildings in the town.

The height of the proposed development is contrary to the guidance in the Masterplan SPD which identifies building heights in the town centre as 2-3 storey and envisages new development, including the housing on the western side, should not exceed three storey or equivalent over an active ground-floor. The proposed houses would be taller than Outfield Crescent which feels tall at 12 metres (and will feel taller due to the slope); development should be restricted to two to three-storeys with varying heights, in line with the Masterplan guidance; second-floor accommodation should be within gabled roof space; four and five-storey houses

are not in keeping, would be out of scale with Denmark Street and would alter the skyline; the cinema would be 21 metres in height; the houses are also closer to the western boundary than was illustrated in the Masterplan SDP.

The four-storey houses on north and western sides of the park would be imposing and create a shadow over the park. Their design is rather dated and the fourth-storey and balconies detract from their appearance making them seem like watchtowers. Particular concerns is expressed about Blocks A and C and the size of blocks on the corner of Elms Road. Others are positive about the house design.

Provision of small front gardens is welcomed but the boundary walls are too dominant

The inclusion of housing on the west side of Denmark Street is welcome but their height and design could be improved to fit better with those on the opposite side of the road.

The hotel design is incongruous, characterless, bland and featureless. It would be over dominant (due to its height and elevation above Denmark Street), dwarf nearby houses and have a negative impact in a prominent position at the southern gateway of the town. It should either blend with the existing architecture or stand out. To make it in keeping flatten the rounded corner, add bay windows and introduce changes to the roofline. A mix of materials (brick and whitewash) should be used to make the hotel appear like multiple buildings. A pitched or gabled roof with dormer windows would be more in keeping with the town. Others are not too concerned about the size although four-storey would be preferable, understand the need for a landmark at the entrance point and like the contrasting materials on the ground and top floor.

The scale/mass of the shops/flats/cinema is out of proportion

The aluminium and glass/flat roof food store design is bland and does nothing for the market town character of Wokingham not; others like the glass walls.

Lack of space between buildings would be counter to the local context (where larger gaps increase spaciousness) and create a canyon like effect.

It is difficult to understand how the analysis of local character has informed the proposed designs.

There are concerns about window detailing. The house window designs are nothing like the white sometimes multi-paned sashes in the town centre and will soon look dated; the low cross bars and protruding bays do not reflect local character.

Brick and render should be used for complete buildings rather than being mixed; contrasting brick detailing should be used as typically found in the town; more consideration needs to be given to how the render is used on the houses which is rather haphazard. The use of slate roofs is inappropriate for the new retail units when most of the older buildings in Denmark Street have tiled roofs. Development should follow the analysis in the DAS, in particular on materials and details and the windows and brickwork and Vernacular precedent

Too many flats (which are denser than existing buildings) are proposed and not enough family homes with gardens (*Officer Note: see paragraph 71*).

Shops and restaurants should have glass covers to protect pedestrians from the rain.

The ES Technical Summary admits that there will be an adverse effect on views in Denmark Street and Wellington Road

The surface car park takes up too much space and would be better underground as originally proposed.

How will deliveries be made to first-floor flats?

Historic Conservation

11.2 of the Elms Link Road Transport Assessment (p82) recommends removal of the middle

and eastern steps from the terrace should be given consideration at the detailed design stage: these steps are part of the character of the Conservation Area and must be retained; use could be controlled by other methods (the option should be removed from the TA) . (*Officer Note: the Conservation Officer concurs with this view. Condition 16 will secure the detailed design of the junction and informative 4 refers*).

The wall forming the boundary with the WBC access from Shute End and 16 Shute End is listed and the nature of the road will cause damage to the wall and disturbance to occupants. (*Officer Note: see paragraph 156*)

Residential amenity

The height of the proposed development will have an adverse impact on the residential amenity of adjacent dwellings in Albert Road, Park Avenue, Ellison Way, Elms Road and Denmark Street due to loss of light overshadowing, an overbearing impact and loss of privacy.

There is no BRE light assessment/the ES non-technical summary identifies that a number of residential facades will not comply with the criteria for light levels. (*Officer Note: see paragraphs. Reference was also made to right to light. While loss of light is a material planning consideration right to light is a civil matter and is not*)

The impact of the hotel and houses on properties on the opposite side of Denmark Street will be exacerbated because the land is at a higher level

The new houses on Denmark Street would have poor amenity, between the pavement and the service yard/serving from 06:00 (*Officer Note: see paragraph 163*)

9 and 14 Albert Road will lose their currently secluded setting; the development would be overbearing and oppressive. Loss of morning sun would be exacerbated by the four-storey development/rear gable and concentration of activity at the rear would increase overlooking, requiring existing first-floor bathroom and landing windows at No 14 to be obscured. The garden at the front of No 14 is larger than the rear and functions as part of their private amenity space; the whole property would be overlooked; consideration should be given to the cumulative effect as well as compliance with guidelines.

The layout does not conform to the separation distances in the Borough Design Guide.

Other authorities have much more stringent requirements with separations distances increasing with additional floors (*Officer Note: the development must be assessed against adopted policy and guidance for Wokingham Borough regardless of whether alternative standards have been adopted elsewhere*)

The application drawings do not show the relationship with 9 Albert Road accurately (*Officer Note: revisions to address this point have been requested and the approved drawings for No 9 have been taken into consideration in the assessment of the impact upon it*)

14 Albert Road has permission to convert their garage to a habitable room and the new houses will be closer than 15 metres from the flank

The position of the cycle store for Block A limits the scope for landscaping to screen the development (*Officer Note: revised plans have been submitted to address this issue*)

Traffic generation

Scepticism is expressed about the traffic modelling. The proposal will generate traffic, including large vehicles serving the food store will exacerbate existing congestion (and air pollution), especially around the Langborough Road and Carnival Pool roundabouts and in Wellington Road which has been at a standstill since the station redevelopment it will negate the benefits of the station link road. The highway infrastructure is inadequate and there is no space to create/improve road capacity/connect to the distributor roads.

Most of the elements of the proposals could be located on the outskirts of the town spreading

the traffic load rather than concentrating it in the congested town centre (*Officer Note: this would be contrary to policy which seeks to concentrate services in accessible locations to reduce the need for multiple trips and encourage sustainable travel – see paragraph 112*)

Increased traffic/congestion will reduce trade in Denmark Street and be detrimental to the character of the Murdoch Road conservation Area. A bypass would increase footfall (*Officer Note: there are no proposals for a bypass but the strategic highway improvements identified by Core Strategy policy CP10, in particular the northern and southern distributor roads will alleviate traffic passing through the town centre and help facilitate the environmental improvements mentioned in paragraph 130-131*)

Increased traffic/congestion would increase pollution (*Officer Note: Air quality is considered in paragraphs 173-175*)

On-street servicing causes congestion in the town centre; the streets should be widened to accommodate this (*Officer Note: the environmental improvements referred to in paragraphs 130-131 will aim to address this issue*)

Highways

Traffic infrastructure in the vicinity is not suitable

The Elms Link Road to Shute End will substantially increase traffic in what is currently a quiet open safe green space/next to the new play area. Traffic calming will not prevent it becoming being used as a rat run/becoming congested and consideration should be given to restricting right turns out into Shute End. There is a lack of detail about the Shute End junction. Is the new road one-way? (*Officer Note: the road is not proposed to be one way*)

There is poor visibility for vehicles leaving the Carnival Pool site (leisure hub and key location for car parking): the TA mentions improvements but not visibility (*Officer Note: visibility at junctions will be taken into account in the detailed design as a matter of course*).

The congestion that would be caused by three significant junctions close together - Carnival Pool, Elms Field link and Wellington Road roundabout – plus the hotel visitor bays, pedestrian crossing and other existing accesses has been underestimated. Vehicles leaving the hotel/supermarket service yard will be a potential hazard for people using the car park, oncoming vehicles and pedestrians. Mixing pedestrians and traffic should be avoided. If servicing vehicles leave at peak times they will add to congestion

The brick pillars will restrict visibility at the park entrance

A roundabout would be more useful at the junction of the new road with Wellington road which will serve new and existing housing and the Elms Road multi-storey (rather than the new car park and hotel)

The TA suggests that traffic will decrease around the Carnival Pool and Langborough Road roundabouts once the Southern Distributor Road comes into service but traffic from the SDR and Finchampstead Road will cause congestion in Molly Millars Lane, in particular at the Barkham Road junction, exacerbated by traffic generated by development at Arborfield Garrison and increased train frequency/length.

The location of the hotel poses significant traffic and access problems. The hotel drop-off bays add danger at a busy roundabout and will be hazardous for pedestrians who will be on the wrong side of the road/a fair way from the crossing.

The access to hotel service yard will require lorries to turn right across busy traffic or to swing out to turn in; vehicles coming down Denmark Street should be required to turn around the Carnival Pool roundabout to access the service yard. Permitting this access will increase the frequency of lorries entering Langborough Road and Gipsy Lane and becoming stuck (*Officer Note: see paragraph 120*)

The four-way junction at Langborough Road (already over capacity at peak times according to the TA, although oddly it shows the development will have little effect) will add traffic at a busy

roundabout and make crossing for pedestrians more dangerous /increasing congestion. Will large vehicles be able to negotiate the roundabout? The layout of the southern access to the mixed use block is inadequate/dangerous and should be pedestrian only (*Officer Note: see paragraphs 120, 126-127 and 132-133*)

Langborough Road suffers from lack of parking and is congested, especially at peak times: this will become worse if vehicles use Langborough Road to access the development and it could become difficult for residents to park especially if shops open into the evening. Traffic flows could be improved by introducing a one way system around part of Gipsy Lane/Fairview Road/Langborough Road.

The travel plan identifies limited cycle facilities in the vicinity but does not plan improvements. Provision should be made for a segregated cycle path across the town to encourage cycling for shopping, school trips and commuting and reduce car traffic, connecting the station to the town centre. A cycle path should be provided along Wellington Road as it is too narrow/busy for cars to pass cyclists safely. (*Officer Note: there is not sufficient land available to deliver a continuous cycle path along Wellington Road, or therefore, to safely deliver the benefits of a segregated route but the environmental improvements referred to in paragraph 130 will improve conditions for cyclists*)

Denmark Street should be widened between Langborough Road and Carnival Pool roundabout to improve pedestrian safety. (*Officer Note: it is proposed to increase the width of the carriageway and the western footway on the section of Denmark Street between the Langborough road and Carnival Pool junctions.*)

Wellington Road and perhaps the whole one-way system should have a 20mph speed limit

Lack of linkages from the development to the town centre

Lack of cycle lanes

The travel plan suggests that to “accommodate the school run” occupiers will be encouraged to offer flexible start/finish times. In other words WBC wishes to perpetuate the biggest factor in peak congestion and discourage walking/cycling to school. (*Officer Note: The document is suggesting people should be given the flexibility to travel outside peak times, not that sustainable travel to school should not be encouraged*)

The Travel Plan target of reducing single occupant staff travel by 5% over a five year period is not ambitious enough. Unless the travel plan is monitored new residents will drive everywhere. The application indicates that WBC will retain commercial assets/act as landlord and therefore control travel Plan initiatives. How will owning the freehold of a few shops control travel into the town centre? (*Officer Note:*

Lack of parking controls (Condition 20 refers)

The application form states that no Public Right of Way will be diverted/extinguished/created but part of Elms Road is being removed and a new road created

The ES indicates that construction workers will mainly commute to work which will have a negative impact

The Transport Assessment indicates that deliveries to the retail units within the development will be managed to avoid the busiest times. This has never been achieved throughout the town, why should it happen now? (*Officer Note: the Council will have control through planning conditions – see Condition – which is not the case with many of the older premises in the town and also in this case as the landlord*)

Pedestrian crossings are needed; they should be quicker than the ones at the station which are on a rota and have sound or vibration to indicate when it is safe to cross.

Parking

There is high car ownership in the borough, the population is increasing and recent reports indicate bus travel is declining but the intention is to reduce car parking. The proposal will result in a loss of parking (there are discrepancies regarding how many) and increase in visitors.

There does not seem to be enough parking which will make people reluctant to visit and affect the viability of the businesses (*Officer Note: town centre parking is considered in paragraphs 134-140*)

There is not enough parking for the residential development which will result in on-street parking/obstruction of the pavement /emergency access as at the Cricket Club. It is not acceptable to rely on town centre car parks for visitor parking. (*Officer Note: residential parking is considered in paragraphs 146-149. It is worth noting that the maximum parking standards that were in place when the Cricket Club site was developed have been replaced by a parking demand approach based on local evidence*)

The proposed on-street unallocated/visitor parking will be used by rail commuters (*Officer Note: see paragraph 147*)

There is a lack of parking for the hotel (*Officer Note: parking for the hotel is considered in paragraph 145*)

If hotel visitors are to park at Carnival pool or other public car parks, they will be at risk when crossing Wellington Road even with the controlled crossing (*Officer Note: see paragraph 130*)

Will hotel visitors be charged for parking? (*Officer Note: see paragraph 145*)

Is two blue badge spaces sufficient for the hotel? (*Officer Note: the policy requirement for 'blue badge' parking is based on the number of parking spaces in a given car park –see paragraph 140. Hence, there is no policy requirement for 'on-site blue badge' spaces for the hotel and the operator has not sought any. A drop-off is also proposed close to the entrance.*)

Given the older age profile of the community more disabled parking spaces should be provided for the supermarket than the minimum standards require

The 89 space car park will be full for much of the day so not provide opportunities for linked trips. Insufficient parking/charging for parking at the supermarket would lead to on street parking in nearby residential roads e.g. Norton Road, Carey Road. Building more parking for shoppers is short sighted when the future is driverless cars and on-line deliveries (*Officer Note: the proposals comply with current parking standards as set out in paragraphs 134-140 and 146-149*).

If there are no charges for the supermarket car park it will be preferred by motorists increasing congestion. If free parking is provided at the supermarket customers will not go into the town. Free parking/reduced charges is required attract visitors to the town; the Council's proposals to charge for evening and weekend parking will deter visitors/damage trade. (*Officer Note: see paragraphs 142-144*).

There is no suitable public transport from Finchampstead/public transport connections are inadequate (*Officer Note: the application includes some measures to facilitate sustainable travel – see paragraphs 128-133 – but it is beyond its scope to provide additional services*)

There is an inconsistency in the DAS which refers to the Elms Road Multi-storey by various names

The Elms Field car park is unsightly and underused. It should be refurbished or it will detract from the new development.

Noise in use

The existing Spin nightclub causes disturbance to the flats above Virgin Active due to drunken people and taxis. The 18 hour economy – noise/smells servicing, increased traffic from additional bars and cafés with outside seating and late licences lead to more drunkenness/noise disturbing residents and affecting local businesses. Budget hotels are predominantly used by young people as a cheap place to stay after a night out which will cause noise and disturbance (*Officer Note: see paragraph 159*)

Noise from events (including set up and dismantling) and the use of the new road as a rat run

contravenes Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998; the right to private and family life. Consideration should be given to acoustics, as noise from traffic and events echoes off the houses in Outfield Crescent and this will be worse if the number of events increases (*Officer Note: see paragraphs*)

Noise from early morning and late night deliveries (six per day starting from 06:00 hours) and vehicles reversing into the food store loading bay will cause disturbance (*Officer Note: see paragraphs*)

Flooding

The reduction in trees combined with shallow groundwater (there is an underground waterway at the top of Albert Road and increased hard surfacing will increase flood risk and could lead to land movements (*Officer Note: paragraphs refer*))

Affordable Housing

Elms Field is allocated for housing by MDDL Policy SAL02 amplified by Appendix 12, which requires 35% affordable housing subject to viability. The Council have stated the project is viable so why is no affordable housing being provided? This will open the floodgates for other developers. The houses should all be affordable. (*Officer Note: see paragraphs 198-200*).

The development at the pavilions is comparable (a similar number of houses and provision of enhanced cricket facilities) and met the 26% affordable housing requirement at the time (*Officer Note: each application must be assessed on its own merit and no viability case was put forward in relation to the Pavilions*)

Viability

There is a lack of financial transparency/potential conflict of interest with the Council being the landowner, developer and LPA; there should be independent scrutiny or the finances should be in the public domain. The land cost the Council nothing but appears to have been valued as if it had been paid for at market rates. (*Officer Note: finances are only a material planning consideration in so far as they relate to the ability to mitigate the impact of development -*)

Wokingham is being destroyed by greedy developers; only the Council's coffers benefit. The project is not about the competitiveness of the town; money from this development is being used to deliver infrastructure such as distribution roads that was not secured in relation to other housing developments. (*Officer Note: see paragraphs 132 and 201-202*)

Sustainability

The scheme achieves only 57% BREEAM for the retail units and cinema, well below the score for excellent or outstanding. The scheme is average on sustainability and low on innovation; not the high quality development promised.

There is support for PV panels on the hotel roof providing they are not visible but they should be provided the supermarket too

There is no strategy for collecting and reusing water. The swale and rain gardens are helpful and should be monitored to ensure they have sufficient capacity (*Officer Note: Condition refers*)

Other issues

The process is undemocratic and unfair as the Council is both the applicant and the Local Planning Authority; any profits will be channelled into developments in other parts

of the borough so Councillors representing those areas will support the proposals; the DAS was inaccessible due to the large number of pdf documents (*Officer Note: this is usual procedure; the Local Planning Authority is the regulatory authority and must assess each application on its own planning merits*)

It is odd that the Executive resolution to release CIL was in January which suggests a decision has already been taken on the application regardless of the report (*Officer Note: the reason for this is explained in paragraph 202. It would not be possible to grant planning permission until the commitment was in place and payments would only be triggered once planning permission had been granted.*)

Construction noise will harm nearby businesses in Denmark Street (*Officer Note: Condition 25 refers*)

The illustrative material is misleading with little traffic and good weather

There is too much information on the website and it should be summarised into easily digestible documents (*Officer Note: the primary purpose of the application is to enable to the impacts to be full assessed by relevant expert consultees and hence, of necessity, the application documents are very detailed*)

Access rights to the Paddocks Car Park from 22 Park Avenue and elsewhere (*Officer Note: this is not a planning matter*)

There is not enough infrastructure – schools, surgeries etc. - to support the development (*Officer Note: see paragraphs 201-202*)

Disruption during building works (*Officer Note: Condition 26 refers*)

The Council has not had regard to residents' views (*Officer Note: the application is consistent with Development Plan policy which has been the subject of public consultation; the SCI sets out the consultation on the proposals as they have evolved. Inevitably there will be a range of views on a scheme of this nature and not everyone's wishes will be able to be fulfilled*)

The assessment of Socio-Economic effects in the ES only indicates minor benefits, which is hardly a ringing endorsement

The uses proposed will result in a need for increased policing and therefore council tax rises

Public toilets should be provided (*Officer Note: a WC will be provided in Peach Place but generally the Council operates a "Local Loo" scheme rather than providing public toilets and tenants will be encouraged to participate in this*)

The food store and other food outlets will attract rats and other pests

Public art should be incorporated in the development

It is recommended that the Council set up a Forum for retailers to pool ideas about attracting footfall and consensus on the type of shops

Shop rents/business rates for shops should be lowered to allow business to survive and grow

Lack of meaningful public consultation; views expressed have not been taken on board and people are unaware of the plans (*Officer Note: the proposals have been subject to consultation at the policy formulation and detailed design stage, as set out in the SCI, and this application has also been the subject of consultation*)

How will the effects of the development be monitored?

Alternative options are suggested (*Officer Note: each application must be assessed on*

its own merits regardless of other – potentially preferable – options.)

There should be controls to prevent shopping trolleys being taken off-site and dumped
(Officer Note: Condition 25 refers)

PLANNING POLICY

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies

- CP1 Sustainable development
- CP2 Inclusive communities
- CP3 General Principles for development
- CP4 Infrastructure requirements
- CP5 Housing mix, density and affordability
- CP6 Managing travel demand
- CP7 Biodiversity
- CP8 Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
- CP9 Scale and location of development proposals
- CP10 Improvements in the Strategic Transport Network
- CP13 Town centres and shopping
- CP14 Growth and renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre
- CP17 Housing delivery

Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policies

- CC01 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC02 Development Limits
- CC03 Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
- CC04 Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC05 Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks
- CC06 Noise
- CC07 Parking
- CC08 Safeguarding alignments of the Strategic Transport Network & Road Infrastructure
- CC09 Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)
- CC10 Sustainable Drainage
- TB05 Housing Mix
- TB07 Internal Space Standards
- TB08 Open Space, sport and recreational facilities standards for residential development
- TB12 Employment Skills Plan
- TB15 Major Town and Small Town/District Centre development
- TB16 Development for Town Centre Uses
- TB19 Outdoor advertising
- TB20 Service Arrangements and deliveries for Employment and Retail use
- TB21 Landscape Character
- TB23 Biodiversity and Development
- TB24 Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas)
- TB25 Archaeology
- SAL02 Allocated housing development sites
- SAL05 Delivery of avoidance measures for Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

SAL08 Allocated Mixed Use Sites

South East Plan Policy

NRM6 Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

Supplementary Planning Documents and other guidance

Wokingham Borough Council Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (June 2012)

Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (April 2010)

Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (May 2012)

Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (July 2013)

Wokingham Town Centre and Langborough Road Conservation Areas Study

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

PLANNING ISSUES

The principle of development

1. The Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDDLDP) anticipate this development in type and form, the application being broadly consistent with the concept established in the policy. MDDLDP Policy CC01 establishes that planning applications that accord with Development Plan policies will be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
2. The application site is situated in the centre of Wokingham, a Major Development Location offering a wide range of facilities and services together with a choice of modes of transport to access them, and the town is capable of accommodating major new development (Core Strategy Policy CP9 and MDDLDP Policy CC02).
3. The proposal would result in a net gain of town centre uses within classes A1-A5 including a new food store, a class D2 cinema, a class C1 hotel and class C3 dwellings, with ancillary car parking. A consequence would be a reduction in the amount of public open space. The acceptability, in principle, of each element is considered below.

Town Centre uses

4. The site lies within the designated Town Centre and the eastern part of the site also falls within the Primary Shopping Area (Core Strategy Policies CP13, CP14 and MDDLDP Policy TB15). These policies identify Wokingham as a Major Town Centre (the only one in the Borough), capable of accommodating town centre uses (these include retail, entertainment, arts and culture, indoor recreation, leisure, health, community and office uses) and suitable for growth. Moreover, the aim of Policy CP14 is the growth and renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre: proposals should both retain and enhance the historic character of the town and maintain its position in the Berkshire retail hierarchy by:
 - 1) Strengthening shopping in the retail core to reduce leakage of expenditure;

- 2) Conserving and enhancing historic quality and interest;
 - 3) Improving existing public space; and
 - 4) Ensuring development cumulatively provides and maintains a range of town centre uses, facilitates access them by a variety of modes of travel and achieves enhanced environmental and design quality.
5. To achieve the objectives of policy CP14, the Masterplan SPD identifies five objectives for the town centre: a thriving high street, an eighteen hour economy, streets as places, spaces to breath and setting the design standard. The limited existing retail core is identified as one of the constraints to the success of the town centre and hence it will be necessary to strengthen and extend the retail core, provide new high quality retail development to strengthen the existing offer and encouraging niche and boutique shopping alongside larger retailers.
 6. These Core Strategy Policies are consolidated by the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD and MDDL P Policies SAL02 and SAL08, which allocate "*Land at Elms Field, Wokingham, for the delivery of A1 (retail) floorspace, including an anchor store of circa 3,000 sq m (net) on the existing Wellington House site, with flexibility for A3 uses (restaurants & cafes), A4 (drinking establishments), D1 (community uses), C1 (hotel) and C3 (residential) uses*".
 7. MDDL P Policy TB15 establishes that proposals for main town centre uses (defined at paragraph 4) should demonstrate that they are "*of a scale and form that is compatible with the retail character of the centre and its role in the hierarchy of retail centres*". They should also demonstrate that "*they contribute to the provision of day and evening/night-time uses*" and are compatible with other uses and "*enhance vitality and viability*". Reflecting the allocation of the site under MDDL P policy SAL08, Wokingham's primary shopping area has been extended to include the area to the east of the existing Elms Road.
 8. MDDL P Policy TB16 establishes when a sequential test or retail impact test are required. The net gain of A1 shops (alone and combined with other town centre uses) would be over 500m² but because the site lies within the both the designated Primary Shopping Area and the Town Centre (as explained in paragraph 4) the proposal does not trigger a requirement for a sequential test or retail impact test. Nevertheless, it is relevant to consider how the scale of development relates to that planned.

The Council's retail study and the scale of development proposed

9. The policy framework scale of development proposed has been informed by the Council's Retail Study, commissioned in 2007. The study has been refreshed twice since - in 2010 and 2014 - to inform the town centre regeneration proposals, given recent changes in population, the continued effects of the recession on retail expenditure levels and the growth of internet shopping. The most recent report identified the two most significant changes since 2010 as the slowdown in expenditure growth and the growth in online shopping, although it still remains a relatively low percentage of total retail expenditure. Smaller store formats for convenience goods are also identified as a significant change.
10. The new retail facilities planned in Wokingham town centre, Arborfield and Shinfield will reduce the number of people going outside the Borough to shop -

one of the key aims of Core Strategy Policy CP14 - creating additional demand for both convenience and comparison floorspace (over and above that already planned). While the projections were significantly lower than in 2010 due to lower expenditure growth (during the downturn and forecast) and on-line shopping taking a greater share of the market but nevertheless demonstrated that there would be unmet need even after implementation of the developments planned within the Borough. It was anticipated that the convenience need would be met in part by provision within the SDLs.

11. The retail refresh anticipated a net increase of 3,546m² (net) convenience floorspace and 4,614m² (net) comparison floorspace in Wokingham itself, including developments. There is now more certainty regarding what is coming forward in Wokingham Town Centre: the approved schemes for “Peach Place” (F/2014/2637) and Carnival Pool (O/2015/1056), plus the current application would cumulatively deliver a net increase of 1,148m² convenience floorspace and 3,886m² comparison floorspace: below what was anticipated by 2,398m² net for convenience and 728m² net for comparison.
12. The policies mentioned in paragraphs 4 & 6 anticipate a retail led development incorporating a 4,600m² (gross), 3,000m² (net) food store on the site of the former offices at Wellington House. This location is fundamental to the retail strategy established by the Masterplan SPD (Figure 41) which requires anchor stores at the northern and southern ends of the retail circuit to attract people into the town centre and, once they are there, to encourage footfall through the town.
13. The proposal includes 4,279m² A1-A5 uses; 2,648m² (gross) for flexible use and a 1,631m² (gross) class A1 food store. The location of the proposed food store is consistent with Development Plan policy although it is smaller than anticipated. The smaller size is partly a response to changes in the convenience food market during the last few years, with the trend being away from larger store formats, and partly a response to concerns that the food store proposed under the 2013 application was too large and not in keeping with the character of the town. The store has been identified to meet the needs of an identified operator which demonstrates its suitability for the purpose.
14. Considering the Borough as a whole, the outline planning permission for Arborfield Garrison (O/2014/2280), approved in April 2015, potentially secures more retail floorspace than was anticipated by the retail refresh but was accompanied by a retail assessment which demonstrated that the maximum level of provisions proposed would not be a harmful impact upon the viability of other supermarkets or upon Wokingham town centre. Even taking into account this higher than anticipated delivery at Arborfield, there would still be capacity for additional convenience and comparison floorspace in the plan period, which may in part be delivered in the new neighbourhood centres within the SDLs.
15. The quantum of development for shopping and other class A uses is acceptable in principle; further consideration of how well the proposal fulfils the objectives of the Development Plan and Masterplan SPD is set out in paragraphs 42-50.

Cinema

D1 Non-residential	Clinics, health centres, crèches, day nurseries,
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<p>16. The masterplan anticipated provision of a cinema within the mixed use leisure quarter at Carnival Pool and a mixed-use cultural facility, with flexible performance and exhibition spaces, at Elms Field. Accordingly MDDL policy SAL08 identified the potential for both D1 and D2 uses at Carnival Pool but only D1 uses at Elms Field.</p>	<p>Institutions</p>	<p>schools, non-residential education and training centres, museums, public libraries, public halls, exhibition halls, places of worship, law courts</p>
<p>17. The current proposal for Elms Field includes a 1,160m², class D2 cinema but not D1 uses. It is proposed to be a mid-sized, three-screen boutique cinema and would be likely to show independent films and live screening of events, rather than competing with large multiplex cinemas such as the Showcase at Winnersh. While it is a D2 use there are similarities with the cultural D1 uses anticipated and the use is consistent with the spirit of the policy.</p>	<p>D2 Assembly & Leisure</p>	<p>Cinemas, concert halls, bingo halls, dance halls, swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums, other areas for indoor and outdoor sports or recreations not involving motorised vehicles or firearms</p>
<p>18. The cinema screens and bar are proposed to be located on the first-floor of the northern mixed-use block, with the entrance and class A uses on the ground-floor below; the first-floor location, surrounded by residential development will avoid the massive, blank elevations often associated with cinemas. The applicant chose this location because it will help diversify the function of the town centre in line with the trend for a more leisure focussed retail experience. There is a synergy between the cinema and other non-active leisure activities: for example people like to combine meeting with friends for something to eat or drink with a cinema trip and family friendly restaurants are likely to wish to locate in the vicinity of the cinema. These restaurant, café and bar uses are more appropriately located in the Primary Shopping Area than in the leisure quarter. Furthermore, their proximity to the park would also be mutually beneficial, providing refreshments for visitors to the park and a pleasant setting for the cafés; a positive contribution to the vitality of the town centre. Thus, the location is appropriate for the proposed cinema use.</p>		
<p>19. Another consideration is that the hybrid planning permission for Carnival Pool (planning permission O/2015/1056) includes flexible outline consent for both D1 and D2 uses and the applicant (the Council – also one of the applicants for the current scheme) identified opportunities for dual use of spaces within the leisure complex for sport and cultural proposes. Thus, the two sites together are capable of providing for a range of cultural activities as anticipated by the Masterplan.</p>		
<p>20. The inclusion of a cinema is consistent with the objective of policy TB15 in that it contributes to evening activity.</p>		
<p><u>Hotel</u></p>		
<p>21. The Masterplan SPD anticipated redevelopment of the existing Carnival Pool leisure complex and identified the southern part of the site as a suitable location for an hotel. Subsequently it has been decided to retain and refurbish the pool and MDDL policy SAL08 includes this in the mix of uses for Elms Field.</p>		

22. The applicant's 2013 review of hotel provision in and around the town showed that there was limited accommodation available and this has decreased since with the closure of Cantley Lodge on Wellington Road. The proposed hotel would increase the choice and quality of hotel offer in the town centre and contribute towards evening activity in the town centre.

Residential use

23. While the majority of the 13,500 new homes to be delivered in the Borough during the plan period will be within the four Strategic Development Locations, Core Strategy Policy CP17 establishes that a proportion will be on identified sites within Major Development Locations and MDDL Policy SAL02 g) identifies land at Elms Field and the Paddocks for delivery of 190 dwellings.
24. Thus, proposed residential component is acceptable in principle, although the number of dwellings proposed – 126 - is significantly lower than anticipated. However, the primary considerations are achieving an appropriate mix of town centre uses and a development that is in keeping with the market town scale and character of Wokingham in order to deliver the renaissance of the town centre. The amount of housing included will be sufficient to generate activity throughout most of the day, thus contributing towards the Masterplan SPD objective of an eighteen hour economy. However, a significant increase would be likely to prejudice the overarching aim due to a less successful balance of town centre uses or overdevelopment resulting in harm to the market town character which is one of the town's assets. Furthermore, the shortfall may be partially off-set by development of the adjacent Carnival Pool site: which has outline planning permission for up to 67 dwellings as part of a mixed use development but was not factored into the allocations in MDDL Policy SAL02. In these circumstances, there is no objection to the shortfall in housing numbers.

Loss of Employment floor space

25. Wellington House was formerly a Council office but was demolished in February 2010. The loss of this office space is implicit in MDDL Policy SAL08 which does not anticipate the provision of any class B1(a) office space within the development to off-set the loss of Wellington House. Considering the mix of uses within the town centre more widely, there may be scope for an element of office use within the development at Carnival Pool, although this was not anticipated by SAL08.

Public open space

26. Paragraph 74 of the NPPF establishes that existing open space should not be built on unless either it has been shown to be surplus to requirements, the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location or the development is for alternative sports and recreation provision, the need for which outweighs the loss. Consistent with this, Core Strategy Policy CP3 resists the loss of recreational facilities, land or infrastructure unless suitable alternative provision is available.
27. In this case the principle of development has been established by the allocation of the site by MDDL Policies but the extent of the loss and the quality of the alternative provision remain to be considered.
28. The Council's Open Space Strategy (2012) identified Elms Field as a high quality,

well valued facility. Its popularity was attributed to the fact that it is the only large open green space in the town centre, is easily accessible from the shops, offers a play facility and provides a venue for events

29. The Masterplan SPD (paragraph 12.4.14 and Figure 39) identifies the creation of an attractive and useful green space as central to the success of the development. It accepts that the revitalised space will be smaller than the existing one but requires it to be of exceptional quality, combining hard and soft landscaping for maximum flexibility: the space should be capable of accommodating events, combine hard and soft landscaped areas to maximise its flexibility; include a replacement play area, have a planting strategy complimentary to the character of the town centre incorporating existing trees where possible) and have a strategy for street furniture which is complimentary to the town.
30. 2.84 hectares of the application is currently designated as public open space, split into three parcels: 1.7 hectares on the west side of Elms Road which incorporates the play area (0.15 hectares), tennis courts (0.23 hectares) and the former pitch and putt; 0.20 hectares to the south of Ellison Way (currently this area gives the impression of relating to the development at Ellison Way rather than the wider park and hence it's function is largely limited to visual amenity); and 0.94 hectares on the east side of Elms Road which is used for events and informal recreation at other times.
31. There are currently four **tennis courts** on site. While these have had little use recently, due to their poor state of repair, it does not necessarily follow that this denotes a lack of need for sports provision and the proposals include a contribution of £320,000.00 (the cost of providing four fenced, floodlit tennis courts based on the Sport England Calculator) to provide alternative tennis court provision within the sports hub at Cantley Park (approximately a 1km walk from the edge of the designated town centre and 1.5km from the existing tennis courts on site) . (See also paragraph 202). Thus, the quality of provision would be improved (a new surface and the introduction of floodlighting to allow increased use plus access to changing and other facilities at the sports hub) and the location would remain accessible to local residents. An application is due imminently and **Condition** would secure provision.
32. It has been suggested in representations that a similar approach should be taken to the former **pitch and putt** facility. The formal use of both facilities ceased in 2008, although the fencing around the tennis courts remained in place for some time after that, allowing informal use to continue. The hard surfacing for the courts still remains in place and they could – with some investment – be reinstated, whereas the pitch and putt has been absorbed into the wider park and is more appropriately assessed as such.
33. Setting aside the tennis courts, which are to be re-provided elsewhere, there is currently 2.61 hectares open space on site. The proposal includes 1.78 hectares of onsite open space (a net reduction of 0.84 hectares) consisting of 1.59 hectares green space; a 0.25 hectare play area (a net increase of 0.1 hectares) and 0.19 hectares of civic space. In line with the NPPF and Development Plan policy this overall reduction in area must be mitigated by qualitative improvements.
34. The existing **play area** includes eight pieces of equipment: a climbing frame,

three swings, two springers a roundabout and a table tennis table. There is also the opportunity for informal play within the surrounding grassed area.

35. The proposed play area would be larger and, as with the existing arrangements, there would be opportunities for informal play in the wider park. The application gives an indication of the type of equipment that could be provided, to demonstrate that the amount and range of equipment can be significantly improved compared to what is provided on the existing site - an increase from eight to 13 pieces of equipment in simple numerical terms but with scope to improve the play experience with improved quality and variety of equipment. There is also scope to address the shortage of play provision of older children identified in the Open Space Strategy. Thus, the size of the play area would be increased and it has been demonstrated that the quality of equipment within it can be improved.
36. The majority of **events** are currently held on the area east of Elms Road which is 0.94 hectares, although it is rare for a single event to occupy the whole space. This may be partly due to its irregular - almost figure-of-eight - shape with a central pinch point.
37. As proposed the whole of the area outside the playground, including the adjacent, predominantly hard landscaped civic space – 1.78 hectares in total – could be used for events, a larger consolidated space than is currently available. The park layout has been designed in consultation with the organisers of events – the May Fayre, Food and Drink Festival and Winter Carnival – in order to ensure the space lends itself to these uses. Drawings have been submitted showing how stalls, marquees and stages could be satisfactorily accommodated, with the footpath network providing better access than is currently the case; they also demonstrate that these existing events could take place on part of the park while day-to-day activities continued in the remainder of the space or alternatively there would be scope for larger events. There would also be scope for smaller scale events, such as specialist markets; within the hard surfaced civic space (the opportunity to contribute towards provision of civic space was identified in the Council's Open Space Strategy). Provision of improved infrastructure such as water and electricity points will also support use of the park for events.
38. Thus the shape and layout of the park, the introduction of hard-surfaced civic space (a qualitative improvement in an area that currently functions more of a service area; see paragraphs 125 & 127) and a network of paths fulfil the Masterplan objective of combining hard and soft landscaped areas to provide a flexible space incorporating a play area and with flexibility to accommodate a variety of events. The introduction of new development facing onto the park – residential properties around the northern and western edges and town centre uses with residential above on the eastern side - will provide natural surveillance, making the park safer for users. It will also help integrate the park into the town centre, rather than feeling like a slightly isolated space at the back of Denmark Street which you pass on the way into the centre. Shoppers walking from the anchor store will be able to walk along the edge of the park and there will be opportunities for cafes, restaurants and bars with outside seating, offering additional opportunities to enjoy the space. Overall, the consolidated park will provide a less fragmented, more useable space which will compensate for the reduction in size and this, combined with the wider benefits to the vitality and viability of the town centre derived from the development as a whole outweigh any

objection to the principle of a reduction in the area of open space, which was in any case established by adopted policy and guidance.

39. Core Strategy Policy CP3, amplified by MDDL Policy TB08 also requires development to provide for a framework of open space, sport and recreational facilities to meet the needs of residents of the new development; this will be secured through CIL (see paragraph 201).

Conclusion regarding the principle of development

40. The principle of a retail-led, mixed use development around a reconfigured park is entirely consistent with Development Plan policy. The scale of development is appropriate and the mix of uses proposed is consistent with the objectives of Development Plan policy (and Masterplan SPD) of strengthening shopping in the retail core and providing a mix of uses that contribute to activity throughout the day and evening. The reduction in the quantum of open space can be mitigated by qualitative improvements.
41. Under Class V of Part 3 of the Second Schedule the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, for the first ten years the use of buildings within the development would be able to change freely between any of the approved uses, unless restricted by condition. The use at the end of the ten year period would become the established use and from that point forward normal permitted development rights for change of use of the buildings would apply. Given the varied uses proposed under this application, this level of flexibility would not be appropriate but equally a degree of flexibility is necessary for a successful town centre. Condition 3 refers.

Retail Policy

42. As set out in paragraphs 4-15, the application relates to an allocated site, within Wokingham Town Centre and largely within the Primary Shopping Area where the proposed town centre uses are acceptable in principle. Nevertheless, consideration should also be given how well the proposed retail provision fulfils the retail policy ambitions for the town.

The SPD Vision

43. The objectives of Core Strategy Policy CP14 include strengthening shopping in the retail core of the town to reduce leakage of expenditure and providing a range of town centre uses. The limited existing retail core is identified as one of the constraints to the success of the town centre.
44. The SPD (Figure 41 etc.) establishes a land use/retail strategy to deliver the vision for the town centre. It consists of two mixed use retail quarters - one to the north-east of the Market Place, extending along Rose Street and Peach Street with the existing Marks and Spencer store forming a retail anchor; the other at the southern end of Denmark Street centred on a new retail anchor - connected by a high street (Denmark Street). The regeneration of the northern retail quarter has already been consented (planning permissions F/2012/1678 and F/2013/2283).
45. The current application lies within the southern retail quarter, which it is envisaged will provide retail led mixed use development. Paragraph 10.2.4 explains that “Denmark Street will be anchored by retail led mixed use development to the

south, on the existing Wellington House site. Additional retail development could be integrated as part of a mixed use development to the rear of Denmark Street, to create a secondary retail circuit, and active ground floor uses onto Elms Field.”

46. The layout of the proposed development is consistent with the SDP vision with an anchor store at the southern end of the site, other town centre uses backing onto existing properties in Denmark Street and pedestrian links connecting to Denmark Street.
47. As well as reconfirming the need for additional retail development within Wokingham Town Centre, the retail refresh identified a number of changes in patterns of retailing since 2010 including smaller store formats for convenience goods; a rise in charity shops and discount retailers (pound shops); and high street comparison retailers looking for larger units (over 200m²). It also provides guidance on the type of accommodation required. Currently 70% of the units in Wokingham town centre are small units (less than 150m² gross) and are not suitable for multiple retailers, although they may still be attractive to independent traders and non-retail services. There is a limited supply of medium (150-250m² gross) and large units (over 250m² gross) and the recommended strategy for the town is to provide more medium/large (over 150m² gross) units suitable for multiple retailers.
48. The proposed commercial units have been designed to provide flexible accommodation that can expand and contract as needs change; unit sizes have the potential to vary from 45m²-700m² gross. The larger units are intended to cater for occupiers who would like to be situated in Wokingham but cannot currently find suitable accommodation. The smaller units – to the north of the food store – will be more suited to smaller, independent retailers who will benefit from the footfall generated by the national retailers, food and drink and leisure uses.
49. Although each application must be assessed on its own merits it is relevant to consider how the proposals fit with the overall strategy for the town, in particular the approved development at “Peach Place”. The approved scheme for Peach Place will provide a mix of small, medium and large units - some existing and others new – with the new units indicatively shown to range in size from 84-307m² in but with flexibility for different configurations. Thus, the two schemes together have the flexibility to provide a variety of unit sizes including the larger units that have been identified as lacking in the town centre. As well as size comparison operators are discerning about layout, location and the quality of the town centre environment. Thus, the combined proposals will increase the quantity and improve the quality of retail floorspace providing modern flexible accommodation, capable of providing larger units that are lacking in the town at present.
50. Recent research by Peter Brett Associates for the British Property Federation identifies the importance of ‘curation’ to the success of town centres. Those centres (or parts of centres) which are under a single control and where the mix of occupants is actively managed to achieve complimentary uses are generally much more successful (in terms of attractiveness to visitors and therefore economically) than those where ownership is fragmented. The applicant currently controls both the “Peach Place” and Elms Field sites and envisages they will be managed to complement each other with more family friendly occupiers on the Elms Field site, where there will be a synergy with the cinema and park. This will also assist in

the delivery of Development Plan aims.

The impact upon the character of the area including the character of the Wokingham Town Centre and Langborough Road Conservation Areas

51. Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP3 require proposals to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment and contribute to a sense of place, while avoiding detriment to heritage features. Policy CP14 relates specifically to Wokingham Town Centre and requires development to retain and enhance the historic market town character of the town, conserving and enhancing historic quality and interest and improving existing public space (paragraph 4). The Masterplan SPD reinforces this, requiring new development to achieve the highest quality of architecture and urban design, be sustainable and enhance the market town character of Wokingham.
52. The northern part of the application site (the land around the Council Offices) and the area to the west of 31-41 Denmark Street fall within the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation area and while none of the buildings within the application site boundary is listed, it forms the setting for a number of the listed buildings in the town centre, most notably those in Shute End and Denmark Street and parts of it are highly visible from the Town Centre and Langborough Road Conservation Areas.
53. 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 of the Conservation Area and setting of listed buildings. This is reinforced by MDDLDP Policy TB24.
54. The site is also situated on a Green Route Green Route Enhancement Area, designated due to the positive contribution made by the trees and other vegetation that line it. Core Strategy Policy CP3, saved WDLDP Policy WBE4 and MDDLDP Policy CC03 Development require development to protect and enhance the Borough's Green Infrastructure, incorporating high quality landscaping as an integral part of the scheme.
55. Masterplan acknowledges that development at Elms Field needs to balance retention of an attractive green space with development capable of improving the competitiveness of the town. As well as revitalising the open space the objectives are to address some of the existing weaknesses such as the lack of active uses and buildings framing the park.
56. One of the most significant impacts of the development will inevitably be the loss of significant, mature trees. There are currently 271 individual and 31 groups of trees on the site; of these 172 individual (11 categories A and 16 Category B) and 15 groups would be removed. These include the majority of the trees along the eastern boundary of the site – either at the rear of the properties in Denmark Street and along the edge of the site – those south of Ellison Way and those within the paddocks car park, including the trees along the southern boundary of the car park.
57. The trees along the eastern boundary of the site mark the southern extent of the medieval town and assist with the legibility of the town's development: there is a tension with the Masterplan objective of integrating Elms Field and the surrounding

new development with the rest of the town. Glimpses of these trees are seen between the fine grained, domestic scale development along Denmark Street, providing them with a verdant backdrop, and their loss would adversely alter the setting of the Dukes Head Public House, the Crispin Public House, No.'s 47-49 and 51-53 Denmark Street (all grade 2 listed) and the former Primitive Methodist Chapel at No. 53A. The proposals currently do little to soften the gabled east elevation of the rear of Retail Units 003 – 007 and conditions are recommended to consider the detailing of this elevation (Condition 55) and the scope for landscaping within the car park to soften views (Condition 12).

58. The alignment of the axis of the link to the park with the Dukes Head would enhance its role as a landmark building and is welcomed. Whilst efforts have been made to break up the massing and to locally reduce the height of the development in this area, the lack of any landscaping to replace the lost trees and soften the suburbanising impact of the development on the verdant aspect this building currently has to the park is regrettable, and not considered to preserve or enhance its setting. Similarly westerly views from the Langborough Road Conservation Area and when approaching from the south currently terminate with a the tree-lined parkland edge; these will be replaced by development of up-to five storeys with limited space for planting to soften the impact.
59. The development would also further urbanise the Paddocks car park which, although urban in character does preserve a degree of openness where there once were fields.
60. The masterplan anticipates that terraced town houses of up to three-storeys should create new frontages onto the northern and western edges of the park, although it acknowledges that in some locations additional height may be acceptable in order to create visual enclosure and a strong urban edge to major areas of public open space or create local landmarks. It also identifies consistency of street enclosure as an important element of the town's character
61. The pattern of development proposed is consistent with the Masterplan SDP with residential development facing on the western side of the site, facing onto the park and the new road, and mixed use development on the eastern side, also providing an active frontage on the park.
62. The proposals are for a mix of flats and houses ranging from two to four-storey (up to a maximum of 14 metre ridges for the houses and 15.9 metres for the flats). The majority of the residential development facing on to the park would be four-storey in order to create a sense of enclosure without dominating the space (the design of the rear of the proposed dwellings has been revised to reduce the impact on neighbouring properties. The design of the buildings has been informed by assessment of the character of the town centre.
63. The site of the former Wellington House is identified by the Masterplan as a location for larger scale retail development, but makes clear that smaller units should be wrapped around the edges to avoid blank facades. For the reasons explained in paragraphs 9-15 and 21-22 an hotel is now proposed on the corner of Denmark Street and Wellington Road.
64. The proposed hotel would be four-storey (12.5 metres), rising to five (15.75

metres) on the corner of Denmark Street and Wellington Road. The reception and restaurant would be located on the corner to provide an active frontage at this gateway location. Articulation of the elevations and the use of materials - in particular a darker, contrasting brick on the ground-floor and visually lighter cladding on the top floor - would help break up the mass of the building.

65. The anchor food store would be located to the north of the hotel, with a shared service area between. It would be six metres in height, with its entrance in the western elevation. There would be three-storey development of up to 12 metres along the northern side (smaller commercial units with duplex flats above), flats on the corner with Denmark Street and a terrace of three houses (2.5 storey design with a nine metre ridge) facing onto Denmark Street, reflecting the smaller scale of the dwellings immediately opposite.
66. The mixed use building would contain a variety of town centre uses and the entrance to the cinema on the ground-floor, with the cinema itself and flats (some single storey, some duplex) above. Taking cues from the varied rooflines typically found in the town centre, four-storey gables (up to 21 metres to the ridge on the park side) would be interspersed with second-floor roof terraces, considerably breaking up the mass of the building. There would be a bar in the cinema, overlooking the park and this, combined with the residential units would avoid the blank elevations typically associated with cinemas and provide an active frontage onto the park. The height of the building would be reduced on the eastern side, backing onto Denmark Street, with a maximum height of between 16.5 metres (set back from the edge of the building) or 14.7 metres. The apparent height would be reduced somewhat as the ground-level within the site would be approximately 1.5 metres lower than the properties in Denmark Street.
67. The design approach detailed in the DAS, based on an analysis of elements of the existing townscape character, and applying them to a design which is clearly of its time, is appropriate in this context. The references to window: wall proportions, vertical window hierarchy, traditional roof forms, and architectural features such as projecting bays, dormer windows and brick recessed details to door reveals etc. should help the development relate to its town context.
68. In terms of materials, the general emphasis on red brick (which should match the local red/orange multi), broken with render is welcomed. There are reservations regarding the universal use of slate roofing. Both slate and clay tiles are used within the town with clay tiles characterising the earlier historic streets (particularly Rose Street and The Terrace), and slate being more widely introduced in the 19th century areas of expansion (e.g. Langborough Road) and on key buildings such as the town hall and the Rectory (council offices) at Shute End. Introduction of clay tiles within some parts of the development should be considered at the conditions stage (Condition 6 refers).

Making efficient use of land and the of development

69. Core Strategy Policy CP3 and CP5 require efficient use of land which makes use of the full potential for complimentary uses and the Borough Design Guide establishes that assessment of an appropriate density for residential development must be design-led.
70. Consistent with MDDL Policies SAL08 and SAL02, the proposal is for a mixed

use development, primarily for town centre uses including dwellings. In these circumstances, achieving an appropriate mix of uses and high quality design are the key considerations. Inclusion of dwellings fulfils the objectives of using the potential for complimentary uses and making efficient use of land by virtue of being a mixed use development. By providing a variety of uses it will help fulfil the objectives of the Masterplan, in particular a thriving high street and an eighteen hour economy.

Dwelling Mix

71. Core Strategy Policy CP5 and MDDL Policy TB05 seek to provide a mix and balance of dwelling types and sizes, which have regard to both the underlying character of the area and the current and projected needs of households.

Dwelling size/type	West side		East side		Total	
One-bedroom flat	17		11		28	
Two-bedroom flat	51		9		60	
Three-bedroom flat	0	6	13	16	13	22
Three-bedroom house	6		3		9	
Four-bedroom house	14		0		14	
Five-bedroom house	2		0		2	
Total flats	68		33		101	
Total Houses	22		3		25	
Total dwellings	90		36		126	

Residential Amenity

72. In addition to the overarching requirement for good design, Core Strategy Policy CP3 requires that development should not harm the amenity of adjacent sites.

Separation distances between dwellings

73. To maintain acceptable levels of privacy, the Borough Design Guide establishes minimum separation distances - 10 metres front-to-front across the street, 12 metres back-to-flank and 22 metres back-to-back - whilst acknowledging that greater separation may be desirable between higher buildings and conversely that development in more urban settings or with a more intimate character may require a tighter, more compact layout. Up to 26 metres back-to-back and 15 metres back-to-flank is desirable between houses with three or more storeys and 30 metres for flats/houses with living rooms above ground floor.
74. **9 and 14 Albert Road** currently enjoy a relatively peaceful and secluded setting adjacent to the park; unusually so given their town centre location. Development of Elms Field will inevitably have an impact on the amenity of occupants. The planning consideration is not the extent to which their setting will change but whether the objectively assessed impact is acceptable.

75. **9 Albert Road** is located to the west of application site, adjacent to Block A and plots 11-13. Access is from Albert Road and its private amenity space lies to the south, between the dwelling and Wellington Road.
76. The property was originally constructed as a bungalow with its main outlook to the front and rear (north and south) and only a galley kitchen (about 5 x 3 metres) and en suite bathroom facing east towards Elms Field. Subsequently planning permission has been granted for single-storey front and side extensions (F/2004/3010 amended by F/2005/5015, implemented) and for a loft conversion with side and rear dormer windows (F/2008/0368, partially implemented and therefore extant). As extended the kitchen and a ground-floor bedroom have their only outlook to the east, across a small courtyard, approximately 2 metres in depth. A dressing room and utility room also look out onto this space. The approved loft conversion includes three dormers (serving two bedrooms) in the eastern elevation, one of which has been constructed although the first floor is not accessible.
77. It is not unusual for kitchens to have a relatively limited outlook to the side of a dwelling: in this case it is a relatively small kitchen (and there is a separate dining room) so it should not be given the same weight that a habitable room would be. Bedrooms, however, are considered to be habitable rooms albeit in this case the dwelling has been altered such that the room is reliant outside the occupants' control for its outlook. Some weight should also be given to the scope for habitable rooms to be constructed at first-floor in the eastern elevation but this is more limited because anyone carrying out further works would be aware of the proposals for Elms Field.
78. Block A and plots 11-14 will have the greatest impact upon 9 Albert Road.
79. Block A is proposed to be a four-storey apartment building, containing ten flats but the rear wing would be limited to three-storeys; the only third-floor windows proposed in the western elevation would be high level skylights 22 metres from the boundary.
80. Block A would be outside the normal field of vision when viewed from rooms at the rear of No 9 and it would not affect daylight reaching these windows. Habitable rooms would be at least 16.5 metres from the boundary which exceeds the minimum back-to-flank separation of 12 metres (and the more generous 15 metres recommended for buildings of over two-storeys) and views towards the rear of the neighbouring property would be oblique. Hence, there would be no unacceptable overlooking of the rear garden or rooms in the rear of No 9.
81. The most sensitive window in the east elevation of 9 Albert Road is the bedroom window: although this is the flank of the building, the bedroom is a habitable room and, hence, is appropriately assessed as a back-to-back relationship. There would be at least 25 metres between the bedroom window and habitable room windows in Block A (in the west elevation and also the north, some of which would also afford oblique views). The plans show a first-floor living room at the front of the houses (plots 11-14) with a bedroom at the rear and given that the front room is slightly larger and has a rectangular footprint, it seems most likely that this is how future occupants would use the space. The top-floor windows in the rear elevation would be limited to high-level skylights lighting en suite bathrooms and

stairs. The minimum separation from first and second-floor bedrooms would be 22 metres, meeting the minimum separation distance. The separation would fall short of more generous 26 metres recommended between houses with three or more storeys but this is an urban location. Furthermore, the reliance on land outside the control of 9 Albert Road for an outlook in itself represents poor design. While there would be an impact upon the bedroom it would not be unacceptable. The first-floor dormer is a further 1.5 metres back from the boundary and, if the loft conversion were completed, this relationship would also be acceptable. There proposed buildings would be 19.5 metres from the courtyard at the side of No 9 which would be sufficient to avoid unacceptable overlooking of this secondary private amenity space.

82. Oblique views from plots 13 and 14 would be towards the front of No 9, with at least 24 metres separation and largely screened by the garage and front extension along the eastern boundary the neighbouring property.
83. **14 Albert Road** is a two-storey detached house with a sun room to the rear and a single-storey garage and workshop to the eastern side. In December 2015 a certificate of lawfulness (152993) was approved for the conversion of the workshop to habitable accommodation. The layout shows a window in the eastern elevation check if existing as not on earlier plans and timber doors retained in the rear elevation and the conversion works have started.
84. A row of four-storey houses are proposed to the east of this property (plots 13-19). Plots 15-19 would have a first-floor living room; the rear windows on the third-floor would be limited to an en suite bathroom window (Condition would ensure obscure glazing). There would be at least 17 metres from habitable room windows on the upper-floors of plots 13-17 and the less sensitive, front garden of No 14. Plots 18 and 19 would face towards the more sensitive, private rear garden. There would be a minimum of 14 metres complying with the 12 metre minimum back-to-flank separation but slightly below the more generous 15 metres recommended between taller buildings; plot 18 would comply with both.
85. The French windows in the side elevation of the sun room are 10 metres from the boundary, which is sufficient to prevent unacceptable overlooking of a structure of this type. The side window in the workshop that it is proposed to convert to an office/bedroom has its window in the flank elevation, a minimum of 2.5 metres from the boundary, rendering it reliant on land outside the occupants control for its primary outlook. There would be approximately 19 metres between the first-floor windows in the proposed development and the study/bedroom window which would be ample for a back-to-flank relationship but less than would generally be acceptable between habitable rooms. However, the conversion was started in the knowledge that the Elms Field is allocated for development and this relationship is not so severe that it should not prejudice the proposal.
86. Reference has also been made to a secondary bathroom and large landing window in the eastern flank of No 14 but these do not constitute habitable rooms and could reasonably be expected to be screened with nets or similar to maintain privacy.
87. **8-22 Park Avenue** are a row of detached houses, with generous rear gardens (in excess of 45 metres in length) backing onto the Paddocks Car Park. These

gardens contain a number of mature trees, in particular along the boundary with the car park.

88. The development to the rear of **20-22 Park Avenue** would comprise four-storey houses (plots 19-22). The rear windows would include a first-floor living room, although the top-floor windows would be limited to an en suite bathroom and secondary bedroom window. Plot 19 would have an 11.5 metre deep garden and the others over 13 metres, resulting in overall back-to-back separation distances of over 60 metres.
89. A four-storey block of flats is proposed to the rear of **16-18 Park Avenue** (Block B). The building would be sited a minimum of 16 metres from the boundary and back-to-back separation distances would be in excess of 65 metres.
90. The houses proposed to the rear of **10-16 Park Avenue** (plots 38-42) would be 2.5-storey in height but the second floor windows in the rear elevation would be high level skylights (with a lower sill height of 2.1 metres above floor level) lighting a landing and en suite bathroom, so would not permit incidental overlooking. The closest first-floor bedroom windows would be 9.5 -10.5 metres from the boundary (plot 42); the others are proposed to have deeper gardens and would achieve 11 metres or more separation from first-floor windows to the boundary. The overall back-to-back separation would be over 70 metres.
91. Thus, the proposed development would comply comfortably with the minimum 22 metre back-to-back separation distances and indeed provide more generous separation distances, as recommended between taller buildings. The far ends of the gardens of the Park Road properties would experience a very limited amount of overlooking but this would not materially harm their amenity, particularly taking into account the very generous overall separation distances. Nor would there be unacceptable overshadowing or overbearing impacts.
92. A two storey house is proposed to the rear of **8-10 Park Road**. The nearest first-floor bedroom window would be eight metres from the boundary with a slightly oblique view. A secondary flank window in the flank elevation would also permit an oblique view towards the end of the garden of No 8. While the first-floor windows would be closer to the boundary than would generally be expected, the separation between the dwellings would be over 60 metres, significantly more than the 22 metre minimum required to protect privacy and overlooking would be limited to the end of the generous gardens so would not materially harm the amenity of occupants. Nor would there be unacceptable overshadowing or an overbearing impact.
93. To the northeast of the site are **Ellison Way and Elms Road**. The properties adjacent to the application site are four-storey blocks of duplex-flats. The main outlook from the flats is to the front and rear with only second and fourth floor landing windows in the flank elevations. The layout of southern block (Nos **34-64 Ellison Way**) is unusual in that they are largely reliant on land outside their control – an area of lawn, shrubs and trees - for their southerly outlook. The area in their control tapers to just a metre at the corner of Nos 58-64 and the area of lawn, shrubs and trees beyond is actually public open space and lies within the application site boundary.

94. The east-west wing of Block C1 would be outside the field of vision from habitable rooms within **26-34 and 34-64 Ellison Way** and the back-to-back separation between the remainder of Block C and Nos 34-64 would be at least 32 metres. There would be about 24 metres between the secondary windows in the flank of Block C1 and the landing windows in the flank of 26-32 Ellison Way and 18 metres to the landing windows in 34-40 Ellison Way.
95. A row of four-storey houses (plots 73-76) is proposed immediately to the south of **34-64 Ellison Way**. The rear windows would include a first-floor living room, although the top-floor windows would be limited to an en suite bathroom and secondary bedroom window. At the closest point, the back-to-back separation would be 28 metres and the separation between windows would be slightly greater.
96. Having regard to the extremely limited amenity space within the control of the adjacent properties a garden room is proposed along the rear boundary plots 73-76, set around 11 metres off the boundary and 13.5 metres from the neighbouring property. These structures (they would have a four metre ridge, rising to 5.4 metres at the apex of the adjoining garages) would provide a strong boundary and privacy for occupants of both the existing and proposed dwellings without having an overbearing or overshadowing impact on the amenity space belonging to the Ellison Way. Furthermore, they would continue to benefit from the visual amenity of a landscaped area within the application site.
97. Block D would be an L-shaped, four-storey block of flats. There would be a minimum separation of 22 metres between the southern wing of block D and the corner of 58-64 Ellison Way, which meets the minimum back-to-back separation distance, and the majority of views between the two buildings would be longer and oblique. Views from habitable rooms in the northern wing of Block D would either be long (30 metres or more) or along the rear elevation of the building so would not permit overlooking.
98. **2-8 Elms Road** would have a flank-to-flank relationship with Block D, with a minimum separation of five metres between landing windows in Elms Road and the windowless flank of Block D which drops down from four to three-storey adjacent to the boundary.
99. **1-11 Elms Road** are first and second floor flats above Virgin Active gym and largely single aspect. There would be 17 metre front-to-front separation between this building and Block D - above the minimum of 10 metres and the more generous 15 metres recommended between taller buildings.
100. **56 Denmark Street** is the Dukes Head, a two-storey listed pub. **58-68 Denmark Street** are a terrace of two-storey, Victorian houses; 62 and 68 also have skylights in the front elevation which indicates their lofts have been converted to habitable space. To the south of them lies **1 Norton Road**, a detached two-storey house and to the south of Norton Road **70-74 Denmark Street** are a terrace of two-storey houses. The road falls southwards from the junction of Langborough Road to the Carnival Pool roundabout.
101. Their outlook is currently across Denmark Street towards Elms Field. The park is elevated approximately 1.5 metres above the adjacent footway, with a brick

retaining wall, railings and a bank along the boundary. The houses have front gardens of 3-3.5 metres in depth and there is about 12 metres separation between the front of the houses and the edge of the application site.

102. A combination of three-storey flats (opposite Nos 58-60) and 2.5-storey houses opposite Nos 62-68. It is proposed to lower the ground levels within the application site, so the ground-floor will be at approximately the same level as the houses opposite, and also to set back the development from the site boundary. Thus, there would be front-to-front separation at least 14-15 metres (the minimum is 12 metres with 15 metres recommended for buildings of three-storey or more).
103. The ES explains that there are three tests for assessing the impact of a building on available daylight: the 25° test as set out in the Borough Design Guide, followed by a Vertical Skylight Component (VSC) analysis which measures daylight at affected windows and a more detailed assessment if the VSC is less than 27%. The ES started with the second, more technical test, carrying out a VSC for the whole development. It identified one instance where the VSC for habitable rooms would be reduced to less than 27%; to 25% at 58-64 Denmark Street. The report indicates that where non-compliance is marginal – as in this case – then the third test usually demonstrates the impact is acceptable. This third test is being carried out to confirm this.
104. **1 Norton Road** lies opposite the entrance to the hotel and supermarket service area so the impact would be less than on its neighbours
105. Minimum separation from the closest corner of **70 Denmark Street** to the hotel would be 21.5 metres, increasing to 26 metres where the upper floors step back.

Internal space standards

106. The internal space standards established by MDDL Policy TB07: *Internal Space Standards* and the Borough Design Guide have now been superseded by the DCLG Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard (March 2015). The proposed dwellings would all comply with these standards.

External amenity space

107. The Borough Design Guide establishes that dwellings should have access to some form of amenity space, preferably in the form of a private or communal garden. While occupants of upper-floor flats rarely have access to a garden, they should be provided with private outdoor space in the form of a balcony, roof terrace or winter garden.
108. The majority of the 22 houses proposed on the western side of the site would have a private rear garden of at least 11 metres in depth and 16 of them (plots 11-22 and 73-76) would also have the benefit of a roof terrace overlooking the park. The three houses on Denmark Street would have a small courtyard. The exceptions are plots 11 & 12 (10 metres) plots 42 & 43, both of which taper to less than 11 metres but have additional width to compensate. Due to their relatively short depth these gardens would be particularly affected by overshadowing by mature trees within the gardens of neighbouring houses, along the western boundary of the site. The gardens should be landscaped to make best use of the space and reduce the likelihood of future pressure for works to these important

trees (Condition 12).

109. 24 of the 68 flats around the northern and western edges of the park would have a balcony. 19 of the 22 dwellings in the mixed use block would have a balcony or private terrace garden, in a few cases both. The private amenity for the 14 dwellings around the supermarket would be more limited: the three houses would each have a small courtyard garden and one of the flats would have a balcony.
110. There are some people who would value the benefits of town centre living more highly than private outdoor amenity space and, given the town centre location, the wider benefit to the vitality of the town centre derived from the incorporation of residential uses, and the easy access occupants of the new development would have to a variety of public open space in the town centre - in particular the Market Place, Howard Palmer Park and Elms Field itself - the provision of private amenity space is acceptable.

Access and movement

111. Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP6 require proposals to reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car, and consideration of the travel impacts of development. Supported by CP10 and MDDL Policy CC08 they also require development to provide for a choice of sustainable forms of transport and to provide for improvements to existing transport infrastructure including road, rail, public transport and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, including those with reduced mobility.

Accessibility of the site: location

112. Core Strategy Policy CP6 also directs development to locations where there are or will be choices of mode of transport and minimise the distance people need to travel. The site is accessibly located in the Town Centre, where there is a choice of modes of travel available (for occupants and visitors alike) and excellent access to facilities. Not only is this a suitable location for the proposed development but, through the provision of appropriate, additional development for town centre uses, the proposal would reinforce the position of Wokingham as a major town centre providing accessible facilities.
113. Consistent with Policy CP6, Policy CP10 identifies a series of improvements to the strategic transport network, several of which – such as the station interchange and link road - will support the regeneration of the town centre by improving access by all modes and reducing congestion.

Traffic generation

114. Core Strategy Policy CP6 requires the consideration of the impact upon the transport network, road safety and infrastructure improvements. The application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment. The Wokingham Strategic Transport Model (WSTM) supplemented with new traffic surveys, to take into account recent changes such as the opening of the Station Link Road, was used to establish the transport impacts from the proposed development, which are acceptable.
115. Construction traffic can be managed through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Condition 26 refers.

Vehicular access to the site

116. Vehicular access to the site is currently From Wellington Road via Elms Road, the southern part of which would be closed as a result of the proposals. A new link would be provided along the western side of the site, linking Wellington Road to the south (an all movement, priority junction with a right filter in) with Shute End to the north (an all movement, priority junction in the location of the existing Council car park access). A spur off this road, to the east would maintain access to Ellison Way, the Elms Road multi-storey car park and for servicing at the rear of existing properties on the western side of Denmark Street and the Market Place, as well as the new development (see paragraph 125).
117. This is consistent with the approach in the Masterplan SPD (Figure 35 Movement Hierarchy) and paragraph 4.55 of the MDDL P and with the advice in the Borough Design Guide, which advocates a network of interconnected streets. The geometry of the road could accommodate large delivery vehicles and also buses, which would help with network resilience. As anticipated by the Masterplan, the road has been designed as a low-traffic-speed, residential street with dwellings facing onto it, on one side and the park on the other. A footpath is provided on the side of the houses, with alternative routes through the park. Unallocated parking would be provided on-street. Condition 16 will secure the detailed design.
118. It has been suggested in representations variously that that this should not be a through route, that movements should be restricted at the junction with Shute End or that controls should be provided at this junction. What is proposed is recommended as the best approach because it provides an interconnected network of streets – in line with good practice – but does not encourage use of this route as an alternative to the primary highway network (e.g. Station Link Road), which would allow it to be a relatively lightly trafficked street and therefore, not detrimental to the amenity of the park or adjacent dwellings.
119. Three further access points are proposed to provide access to car parks and service areas within the site but would not provide for through traffic: two of these would be on Denmark Street and the third on Wellington Road.
120. An additional arm off the mini-roundabout at the junction of Langborough Road with Denmark Street would provide access to the parking for the residential development above the commercial units and for serving (see also paragraphs 126 & 147). Between this junction and the Carnival Pool roundabout would be an access to the food store and hotel service yard (see paragraph 124). It would be undesirable to have vehicles approaching from the north, along Denmark Street waiting to turn right into the site across the flow of traffic and, therefore, the junction has been designed to force delivery vehicles to turn around the Carnival Pool roundabout and turn left into the service yard. The road geometry would be capable of accommodating the proposed movements. Condition 16 would secure the detailed design.
121. A new mini-roundabout to the west of the Carnival Pool Roundabout would provide access to the new shoppers' car park (see paragraph 136) and also the exit for the food store and hotel service yard.

Servicing

122. In addition to the requirements of Core Strategy Policy CP6, MDDL Policy TB20 require commercial proposals to make provision for servicing without harm to amenity, highway safety visual amenity or any other adverse environmental impact.
123. Three servicing areas are proposed within the development: a dedicated service yard for the food store and hotel plus two areas within the public realm, one to the north-west of the mixed use block and the other to the south-east of it.
124. The food store and hotel service yard would be accessed from Denmark Street and vehicles would leave via Wellington Road, allowing them to enter and leave in forward gear. (There is and would remain no HGV north of the proposed Denmark Street access and the existing signage would need updating to reflect the extent of access). It is anticipated that there would be three HGV deliveries to the food store plus two or three deliveries to the hotel daily.
125. Units 1-6, the cinema and the existing premises within Alexandra Court and Erftstadt Court would be serviced from the civic space to the north-west of the mixed use block, accessed via the New Elms Road. It is anticipated that units 3 to 6 would have approximately one delivery per day, units 1 and 2 two or three deliveries per week and the cinema one or two deliveries per week.
126. Units 7-15 would be serviced from the area to the south-east of the mixed use block. Vehicles would enter from the Denmark Street/Langborough Road mini-roundabout in forward gear and reverse into the entrance to the residential car parking area, which is of sufficient width to allow a vehicle to unload without obstructing access. They would then be able to leave via the same route, also in forward gear. Goods would be trolleyed to their destination (along a rear service corridor in the case of units 7-10). It is anticipated that units 7, 8 and 9 would have one delivery each per day and that the smaller units 10-15 would have two or three each per week. Deliveries and refuse collections for the residential units above the commercial premises would also take place in this area.
127. Apart from the food store and hotel service yard, servicing would be taking place within the public realm. This approach makes good use of space in the town centre (which otherwise would be unused for much of the time) but requires good management to prevent disturbance to occupants of nearby dwellings and avoid conflict between servicing vehicles and people using the space. Condition 17 refers.

Access for pedestrians, cyclists and those with restricted mobility and integration with the primary shopping area

128. Core Strategy Policy CP2 requires new development to contribute to inclusive communities and policies CP6 and CP10 promote measures to support cycling and walking and public realm improvements, to make it easier to travel into and circulate around the town on foot, by bicycle and for and those with reduced mobility. Pedestrian circulation routes are also critical to delivering the retail strategy described in paragraphs 44 & 45. In addition to the routes mentioned in paragraph 116, the Masterplan SPD (Figure 35, Movement hierarchy) identifies a new pedestrian link to Denmark Street to supplement the existing connections through Erftstadt Court and Alexandra Court. Provision of good quality pedestrian and cycle links will be critical to the overall success of the town centre.

129. The application proposes a network of pedestrian routes through the site including footpaths along at least one side of the Wellington Road-Shute End link and a pedestrian route along the eastern edge of the park. The latter would form part of the retail circuit, providing access to the commercial units fronting the park and a direct link to the development on the Carnival Pool site to the south which will provide town centre parking (planning permission O/2015/1056). Together they have the potential to provide a direct and attractive pedestrian route from the car park into the Primary Shopping Area. It will also complete the retail circuit and supplement the existing link through Alexandra Court with a predominantly pedestrian link to Denmark Street, lined by smaller commercial units with residential development above. A condition to secure wayfinding signage is recommended (Condition 12).
130. The assessment of the Carnival Pool application identified Wellington Road as a barrier to north-south movement of people, due to the amount of traffic it carries and to its current design. The application proposed a major town centre car park plus a significant increase in the amount of town centre uses on the south side of Wellington Road and it was considered that improvements – to enhance the environment for pedestrians, including people with restricted mobility, and cyclists – would be necessary to successfully integrate the site with the Primary Shopping Area. Accordingly, Condition 23 requires a scheme of improvements to Wellington Road (including the Carnival Pool Roundabout and access to the site and likely to include a controlled crossing), to improve the environment for pedestrians, cyclists and those with restricted mobility, facilitating easy movement both along and across Wellington Road whilst reducing the domination of vehicular traffic and enhancing its character as a Green Route.
131. The current application includes preliminary designs for improvements to Denmark Street (south of the Market Place where environmental improvements are due to be implemented in spring 2017).
132. Together and subject to more detailed design (building the 2013 Public Realm Strategy) environmental improvements along Denmark Street and Wellington Road will integrate the proposed development with the town centre and help realise the retail strategy in the Masterplan SPD. It is anticipated that these works will be delivered through S106 contributions and CIL.
133. The roads within the development would be relatively lightly trafficked and designed for low traffic speeds (20mph design speed) so would be suitable for use by cyclists. The intention is that cyclists would also be able to use some of the footpaths through the park; Condition 16 would clarify access for cyclists to destinations within the site.

Town centre car parking

134. While Core Strategy Policy CP6 aims to encourage a shift towards sustainable travel methods it also acknowledges the need to provide appropriate parking (particularly given the high levels of car ownership within the Borough) and Policy CP14 4) h) requires that development in Wokingham Town Centre “*cumulatively provides and maintains.... appropriate car parking to facilitate a viable and sustainable town centre*”. MDDL Policy CC07 established standards for different land uses and types of vehicle. Town centre parking is considered in

this section of the report; residential parking is considered separately in paragraphs 146 -149.

135. The proposal would result in a net reduction of 259 town centre car parking spaces (see the summary information table earlier in the report for a breakdown) but this change must be considered in the context of the provision for the town centre as a whole, where there is currently surplus parking capacity.
136. The Masterplan SDP establishes the approach towards provision of town centre parking, whereby medium and long stay parking is provided at a series of gateway car parks around the town centre, to reduce the need to travel by car into the heart of the town centre, assist in reducing congestion and improving the environment for people (paragraphs 7.4.1-7.4.6 and Figure 35). It anticipates development on the Shute End and Paddocks car parks and also that the development on the southern part of the Elms Field site will incorporate short stay parking: the 89 space, shoppers' car park proposed within the development is consistent with this.
137. Implementation of this parking strategy is underway: planning permission has been granted for a 529 space multi-storey car park at Carnival Pool (O/20015/1056) and construction is expected to start during spring 2016.
138. The new multi-storey car park at Carnival Pool is intended to provide parking for the wider town centre as well as meeting the needs of the development on the Carnival Pool site itself. In assessing the size of the car park consideration was given to existing supply, current levels of usage, changes in the level of parking provision as a result of planned developments (including Elms Field) and forecast parking demand in 2026: the report concluded that – based on the forecast demand - the proposed 529 space car park would be able to accommodate on-site requirements and forecast future demand for the town centre. Subsequently Southwest Trains have decided to proceed with a decked car park at the railway station which will add further capacity.
139. This assessment assumed a net reduction of 266 car parking spaces as a result of the Elms Field development and the marginally smaller net loss of 259 spaces proposed is of this order. Providing the approved parking on the Carnival Pool site is available before the use of the existing provision ceases (construction is due to start in spring this year for March 2017 opening) an appropriate level of town centre parking will be provided (Condition refers).

“Blue badge” parking

140. For car parks with overall provision of 21-200 parking pays, MDDL Appendix 7 recommends that three blue “blue badge” parking bays are provided plus 3% of the total capacity. Applying this standard seven ‘blue badge’ bays should be provided in the reconfigured Paddocks Car Park and six each at Shute End and the new shoppers' car park. In addition to this level of provision, two spaces have been proposed at the hotel (within the service yard).

Motorcycle Parking

141. For uses within Class A and C1 Appendix 2 of the MDDL requires one motorcycle parking space per 20 car parking spaces for car parks of up to 100 spaces, reducing to one space per 40 car parking spaces thereafter (the rate is

slightly lower for D2 uses at one space per 40 car parking spaces). Based on the overall level of car parking proposed, the requirement would be for 11 motor cycle spaces which are proposed to be provided within the eastern part of the Shute End car park.

Car park management

142. The public car parking is to be transferred to the WBC Highways Team, to manage as part of the town centre parking portfolio. This will enable the Council to ensure that each car park fulfils its anticipated role in provision of parking to support the function of the town centre.
143. The identified food store operator has indicated that the average duration of their customers shop is 30 minutes. In keeping with the anchor store role, the intention is that the car park will be a short stay car park with a maximum duration of one hour 30 minutes to facilitate visits to other town centre destinations.
144. It is expected that the parking to the west of the new road will function in a similar way to the existing Shute End car park and that the parking to the east of the road will be a public pay and display car park with some staff permit holders, although this is yet to be finalised.

Hotel parking

145. With the exception of the two 'blue badge' spaces mentioned in paragraph 140, no dedicated car parking is proposed for the hotel; this is not unusual for a town centre hotel. The applicant has indicated that peak demand for hotel parking is overnight (18:00-09:00 hours) when there will be capacity in town centre car parks. This would make efficient use of town centre parking and is in line with the identified hotel operator's requirements. (While not directly a planning matter the applicant anticipates this will be provided to hotel visitors either free or at a discounted rate, so it will be more attractive than on-street parking in the vicinity). Drop-off and pick-up bays are proposed outside the hotel entrance on either side of Wellington Road and Condition 20 will secure their provision and a mechanism (most likely a TRO to control their use).

Residential car parking

146. The proposed residential development consists of three distinct groups – the houses around the edge of the park, flats around the edge of the park and the flats above the commercial development on the eastern part of the site – and there is a different approach to parking provision for each.
147. In order to maintain a strong frontage, uninterrupted by parked cars, parking for the properties around the edge of the park is proposed to be mainly to the side and rear of the dwellings. The majority of the 22 houses around the park would have at least two allocated parking spaces: 10 would have two allocated car parking spaces under the shelter of a car port plus a garage; ten would have two allocated spaces under car ports; two would have one allocated space plus a garage. The flats around the park would each have an allocated parking space within a rear parking courtyard. In line with the MDDL policy the allocated parking provision and garages would be supplemented by 26 unallocated parking spaces, including provision for visitors. It is anticipated that the on-street parking spaces will be allocated as short stay and permit holder spaces (Condition 20

refers).

148. Parking for the three houses facing onto Denmark Street and the 33 flats above the commercial units would be provided in a secure car park. Of the 47 spaces 16 would be allocated (one each for the houses and three bedroom flats) and the remainder would be unallocated.
149. The overall provision would be 126 allocated parking spaces/car ports, 57 unallocated and visitor spaces (26 on-street) and 12 garage spaces: using the Council's parking demand calculator this equates to 132 allocated spaces and generates demand for 68 unallocated spaces. The proposed provision of unallocated and visitor spaces is 11 fewer than the demand suggested by the calculator but given the accessible town centre location and proximity to public car parks the level of provision is appropriate. Condition 19 would secure provision of the approved parking.

Cycle parking: commercial and residential

150. Appendix 2 of the MDDLDP establishes cycle storage requirements for the commercial elements of the scheme as set out below. The application acknowledges that the existing level of cycle storage provision in the town centre is low and proposes provision, of short stay storage for visitors in particular, above the minimum requirements.

Use	Size	Total	Long-term	Short-term
Food store	1,631m ²	13 @ 1/125m ²	3 (20%)	10 (80%)
Food store small units	289m ²	3 @ 1/125m ²	1 (20%)	2 (80%)
Mixed-use block units	2,211m ²	19 @ 1/125m ²	4 (20%)	15 (80%)
Total A class uses	4,131m ²	34 @ 1/125m ²	7 (20%)	27 (80%)
Cinema	290 seats	11	-	11 @ 1/25 seats
	30 staff	6	6 @ 1/5staff	-
Hotel	95 rooms	16	10 @ 1/10 bedrooms	-
	30 staff		6 @ 1/5staff	-
Total required		67	29	38
Total proposed		78 (+11)	30 (+1)	48 (+10)

The distribution proposed provision is above this appropriate comprising :

- a secure, 16 space store for hotel staff and visitors, in the landscaped area adjacent to the access to the service area from Denmark Street (the location is appropriate but there is scope for the store to be better integrated into the space; Condition 23 refers).
- a secure, 14 space store for employees of the cinema and A class units long-term spaces in the car park at the rear of the mixed-use block (Condition 23 will secure details of the design of the store); and
- Short-term provision for 48 bicycles consisting of eight Sheffield stands to the north of the mixed-use block and a further 16 to the south of it.

Condition will secure this provision.

151. The cycle storage requirement for residential properties depends on the number of habitable rooms. The requirement for the proposed houses is proposed to be met either in a large (3 x 7 metre) garage or, for those properties without a garage, in a separate cycle store or shed within their private amenity space. The proposed provision for the flats is set out below.

	Policy requirement	Proposed provision
Block A	10	20
Block B	15	24
Block C1	17	28
Block C2	12	24
Block D	14	24
Total for the flats on the western part of the site	68	120
Food store block	17	20
Mixed-Use Block first-floor	17	26
Mixed-Use Block second-floor	14	13
Total for the flats above commercial uses on the eastern part of the site	48	59
Total	116	179

Secure, conveniently located cycle store(s) are proposed for each of the blocks of flats on the western part of the site. The provision for the flats adjacent to the food store is in a ground-floor store. The provision for the flats in the mixed use block is on the entry level for each dwelling. While ground-floor provision is generally preferred for ease of access the storage will be close to the dwellings it serves, which is better for security, and Condition 23 will ensure the proposed lifts will be of sufficient size to accommodate easy movement of bicycles; in these circumstances the proposed provision is appropriate. Condition 23 will secure details of the design of the stores and their provision.

152. The overall provision for the flats is also significantly above the minimum policy requirement, which is to be encouraged in this sustainable location where a range of facilities are available within easy cycling distance.

Environmental Health Issues

153. Core Strategy Policy CP1 establishes that development should avoid areas where pollution (including noise) could impact upon the amenity of future occupants. The proposal is for a mixed use development and consideration should be given both to the residential amenity of future occupants and also the impact that proposed town centre uses may have on residents within the development and nearby. The following paragraphs consider the impact of operational noise including the use of the commercial premises and events (paragraphs 154-167), construction noise (paragraphs 168-171), odour (paragraph 172), air quality (paragraphs 173-175), contamination (paragraph 176-177) and external lighting (paragraph 178).

Operational noise: the impact upon the residential amenity of existing neighbours and future occupants of the development

154. Core Strategy Policy CP1 seeks to avoid development in areas where noise may impact on the amenity of future occupants and MDDL Policy CC06 reinforces this, requiring proposals to demonstrate how noise impacts on sensitive receptors

(both existing and proposed) have been addressed.

155. A baseline noise survey was undertaken in 2015 (to take into account changes in traffic flows in the town centre, in particular from the opening of the Station Link Road).
156. The development will generate additional **traffic** and, more significantly, the introduction of the new link between Wellington Road and Shute End will change traffic flows. The impact of this will be negligible except for the section of Wellington Road east of the New Elms Road link and along the new road. This will be most marked along the northern section of the new road, in particular at **10 & 11 Hulbert Gate**, where the baseline noise level appears relatively low and hence the impact would be more noticeable. However, the noise assessment does not full account for existing traffic levels in Shute End and further assessment may show that the impact is less severe than currently anticipated. Should the impact still be significant noise could be managed by speed control (the intention is that the road will be designed for low vehicle speeds and speeds are likely to be low due to the proximity to the junction in any case). (Other options are unlikely to be practical in this town centre location, particularly as 10 & 11 Hulbert Gate are within the curtilage of 16 Shute End, a grade II listed building). Subject to conditions (Condition 28) acceptable noise levels can be achieved.
157. Generally within the development noise levels would be at the Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level (LOAEL) in areas near roads and car parks and No Observed Effect Level (NOEL) in areas further from these noise sources or screened by buildings. Acoustic glazing (combined with alternative ventilation) is likely to be required to achieve acceptable indoor ambient noise levels in new dwellings in Denmark Street and Wellington Road and a condition requiring approval of details is recommended (Condition 29).
158. A range of uses, including dwellings, is necessary in order to achieve the aim of a thriving town centre but this must be balanced with the need to provide acceptable amenity for both existing residents in the surrounding area and future occupants of new dwellings within the development.
159. The proposed uses include a range of **cafés, restaurants and drinking establishments**. The Environmental Health Officer's advice is that, for premises that will be licensed under the Licensing Act 2004 activity would be controlled through individual premises licences but this would not apply to un-licensed cafés for example and therefore a condition controlling hours of operation (including outside activity) is recommended (Condition 31).
160. The intention is that the public open space within the development will continue to host **events**, the operation of which is controlled under the Licensing Act 2004; indeed it would be a measure of the success of the scheme if the range, frequency and size of events increased over time. This occasional use of the park would have an impact upon the dwellings in New Elms Road, although residents would be well aware of the park-side setting when choosing to live there and the licencing regime would prevent undue disturbance. The new dwellings themselves would screen existing dwellings beyond in Park Avenue, Albert Road and Ellison Way.

161. The ES identifies that high performance building design will be required to prevent noise from within the **cinema** causing disturbance; this will require specialist acoustic advice and a condition controlling the acoustic performance of the building envelope is recommended (Condition 30).
162. MDDL Policy TB20 establishes that the **servicing** arrangements for retail development should not harm residential amenity due to noise, fumes or disturbance. Three service areas are proposed within the development as explained in paragraphs 122-127.
163. A number of new dwellings are proposed in the vicinity of the food store and hotel service yard. It is expected that there will be one delivery during the night-time period (23:00 to 07:00) at approximately 06:00 which, due to the proximity to the dwellings, could cause recommended internal noise levels to be exceeded, although – depending on the level of exceedance - a single incident may not cause disturbance. However, the service area would be at a lower level than the houses and there would be a wall on the eastern edge of the yard, which combined with the construction of the new dwellings and delivery management would prevent unacceptable disturbance (Condition 17).
164. Servicing from the civic space will need careful management to avoid disturbance to residents and conflict between service vehicles and pedestrians while the space is in use. Condition 17 refers.
165. In addition to the two service areas there would be a car park between the mixed use building containing the cinema and the rear of properties in Denmark Street but this would be for residential use so would not generate an unusual level of activity.
166. Subject to suitable detailed design and conditions to control hours of operation and servicing (Conditions 29-32) the proposed mix of uses need not give rise to unacceptable disturbance to occupants of nearby residences or within the development.
167. Plant and machinery associated with the other uses on the site also has the potential to cause disturbance and a condition is recommended to ensure that noise from such equipment is inaudible at nearby residential properties (Condition 33).

Construction Noise

168. The noise generated by construction traffic (88 movements are anticipated daily) would be negligible given the amount of traffic already using the roads around the application site. Providing these trips take place during the normal hours of construction and vehicles are discouraged from arriving early and waiting outside the site, construction traffic will not cause unacceptable disturbance. Conditions 26 & 27.
169. Construction activities on site will also generate noise, particularly during groundworks and infrastructure works, additionally in this case because piling will be required for the foundations of the mixed use development on the eastern side of the site.

170. An Outline Construction Environment Management Plan (OCEMP) has been submitted which identifies various mitigation measures; contractors will be expected to use 'best practicable means' to minimise noise, vibration and dust from construction activity. It is anticipated that Continuous Flight Auger (CFA) piling will be used, which is preferable to other types of driven pile and will minimise noise and vibration. Given the distances involved it is likely that any impact on existing sensitive receptors will be negligible.

171. The Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be further developed by the principal contractor: Condition 26 refers, together with informative 8.

Odour

172. The proposed uses include Class A3 restaurants and cafés, Class A4 drinking establishments and Class A5 hot food takeaways, which can cause nuisance due to cooking smells if not adequately ventilated: subject to a condition to secure appropriate ventilation (Condition 34), there should be no harm to amenity due to odours from new food outlets within the development.

Air Quality

173. The Environment Act 1995 requires local authorities to regularly review air quality and, where air quality objectives are not predicted to be met, to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). A recent review has shown that concentrations of NO₂ are above the annual mean NO₂ objective within some parts of Wokingham and an AQMA is proposed to be declared; the application site is outside the proposed AQMA.

174. The applicant's air quality assessment concludes that (once operational) road traffic in the vicinity (including new link road) will have a negligible impact on air quality.

175. The level of construction traffic will be below the level that would potentially have a significant impact on air quality and providing standard dust control methods for construction sites - as recommended in IAQM Construction Guidance (IAQM 2014) - are to be included in the CEMP for the site (Condition 26), dust should not cause an unacceptable nuisance.

Contamination

176. Core Strategy policy CP1 requires development to avoid areas where pollution may impact upon the amenity of future occupiers and also to limit any adverse effects on water quality (including ground water).

177. As is common within the town centre, the site is identified as potentially being contaminated from historic uses. A desk based assessment and initial ground investigations concluded that the potential for soil and groundwater contamination is low but identified the need for further gas monitoring and identified three areas where further investigation and possibly remediation are required. There is nothing to suggest contamination of such magnitude as to be a constraint on development but further assessment is required and conditions are recommended to secure this, together with remediation and validation as necessary (Condition 36).

External Lighting

178. Some level of external lighting will be required to ensure the space can function safely and support the objective of an 18 hour economy. However, it should be designed so that it does not cause 'light nuisance' to existing and future residents on or around the application site and also to avoid an adverse ecological impact. A condition requiring submission and approval of a scheme of external lighting is recommended (Condition 36).

Ecology

179. Core Strategy Policies CP3 and CP7 and MDDL Policy TB23 establish that development should not have a detrimental impact upon important ecological features and any ecological impacts should be mitigated. Furthermore, development proposals should enhance or provide new biodiversity features.
180. The Environmental Statement identifies the **habitats** with the site as of low or negligible ecological value consisting largely - outside the car parks - of short mown amenity grassland, with a small area of rough grassland, scattered trees and shrubs, native scrub and species-poor hedgerows.
181. In addition to the retained and new native trees the proposed landscaping includes an approximately 600m², species rich 'meadow' grassland. This would provide an overall qualitative improvement in the habitats available, despite the overall reduction in parkland footprint. There is also the potential for the majority of the park grassland (which will need to be relatively hard wearing turf capable of frequent mowing for amenity usage) to be diversified in comparison to the existing amenity grassland.
182. Japanese knotweed – an invasive, non-native species – was identified in the vicinity of the Shute End pond and a condition is recommended (Condition 43) to eradicate it.
183. Surveys identified **bat** commuting and foraging, particularly around the boundaries of the park and pond and five trees were identified as having high (T18 and T26) or moderate (T40, T61 and T62) bat roost potential, although no roosts are currently present; these are proposed to be removed and, hence, it is recommended they are inspected again beforehand (Condition 42). The remaining trees have low or negligible bat roosting potential.
184. **Hedgehogs** were observed on part of the site and while these are not protected they are a species of principle importance: it is recommended that the CEMP (Condition 26) include measures to protect them during construction and that garden fences are designed to allow access for them (Condition 12).
185. Removal of trees will reduce **bird nesting** opportunities in the short-medium term, although they will be replaced as the proposed new planting matures. In the short term this impact can be mitigated by provision of nest boxes (Condition 45)

Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

186. The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) was classified in 2005 under the European Birds Directive due to its importance for heathland bird

species. Accordingly, under regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, the Local Planning Authority must decide whether the project, alone or in combination with others, would be likely to have a significant effect upon the SPA.

187. Core Strategy Policy CP8 and paragraph 4.45, build on the Thames Basin Heaths Delivery Framework, establishing that new dwellings within 5km of the SPA or developments of 50 or more dwellings within 7km can have a significant impact upon its integrity. This impact can be avoided and mitigated through provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Monitoring and Management (SAMM).
188. In this case 126 dwellings are proposed between 5 -7km of the SPA and the site lies within the 4km catchment area of the Council operated SANG at Rooks Nest Wood (MDDL Policy SAL05 and Appendix 10 refer). The MDDL identifies this as one of the developments to be mitigated at n the Rooks Nest Wood SANG and capacity will be secured from CIL, which will be payable on the residential element of the scheme. CIL for SANG delivery is top-sliced through the capital programme.
189. SAMM does not constitute infrastructure and hence falls outside CIL. Hence, the applicant has undertaken to make a separate payment of £18,183.50 towards SAMM (see paragraph 202).

Archaeology

190. Core Strategy Policy CP3 establishes that development should not have a detrimental impact upon heritage assets. This is amplified by MDDL Policy TB25 which requires developments in areas of high archaeological potential – which includes much of the centre of Wokingham – to provide an assessment of the impact of the development upon archaeological remains and to secure preservation in situ or - where this is not practical - excavation, recording and archiving of remains.
191. The site lies beyond the historic core of Wokingham but the Archaeology and Cultural Heritage chapter of the applicant's Environmental Statement identifies the potential for medieval occupation to extend further towards Shute End than was previously thought. A limited amount of trial trenching has already taken place which confirms that the relevant archaeological levels and deposits survive in the vicinity. Hence, there is potential for other archaeological features to survive and a condition to secure a programme of archaeological work is recommended (Condition 40 refers).

Flooding and Drainage Issues

192. Consistent with the NPPF, Core Strategy Policy CP1 and MDDL Policy CC09 require a sequential approach which directs development away from the areas at highest risk of flooding (from any source). Furthermore, development should avoid increasing and where possible reduce flood risk on the site and elsewhere.
193. Core Strategy Policy CP9 identifies Wokingham as a Major Development Location, capable of accommodating major new development, and MDDL Policies SAL08 and SAL02 allocates the site for mixed use development including residential.

Both Local Plan Documents were subject to a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and the site is located in Flood Zone 1, where the risk of flooding is low and all forms of development - including 'more vulnerable' residential uses and 'less vulnerable' town centre uses - are acceptable. Therefore, the sequential test does not need to be applied.

194. The site area is over one hectare and, therefore, a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required. The FRA confirms that the site is located in Flood Zone 1 (land assessed as having less than a 1 in 1000 (<0.1%) chance of flooding in any given year). The Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map indicates small areas of the site to be at low risk of surface water flooding and a localised low spot in the southern corner to be at medium risk of surface water flooding. The FRA also identifies an area of the site where ground water levels were recorded as being high, approximately 0.5m below ground level.
195. MDDL Policy CC10 requires surface water to be managed in a sustainable manner (discharge should first be into the ground, then a surface water body, followed by a surface water drainage system or finally a combined sewer). For brownfield sites runoff rates should be reduced to as near to greenfield rates as possible. (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) should also be provided where practicable, with appropriate arrangements for adoption by the Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority). There should be no adverse impact on the public sewerage network when discharging to a public sewer.
196. Infiltration tests have shown the infiltration potential to be poor. Hence, the FRA and Drainage Strategy propose a connection to the existing Thames Water sewer, with attenuation provided via oversized pipes and storage tanks. Correspondence with Thames Water agreeing the principle of connection to the sewer with restricted discharge has been submitted.
197. The surface water system proposed is designed with sufficient storage to contain the 1 in 100 year storm event with a 30% allowance for climate change without flooding, whilst maintaining a discharge rate approximately half that of the existing rates. Whilst the storage volume would be provided within tanks or pipes rain gardens and swales are proposed to provide improvements to the water quality of runoff from the site. Conditions 5 and 46-49 will secure approval of further details and implementation of the drainage strategy.

Affordable housing

198. Core Strategy Policy CP5 establishes that, subject to viability, developments of at least five dwellings (net) or on sites of at least 0.16 hectares (net) should provide up to 50% affordable housing. The policy also establishes triggers and minimum requirements depending on the location and whether the land was previously developed: 30% for large developments on previously developed land within Major Development Locations rising to 35% on greenfield sites. The application is part previously developed and part greenfield and based on the proportionate split the requirement – subject to viability - would be for 32%, equating to 41 dwellings.
199. The requirement to provide affordable housing is subject to viability testing and the NPPF emphasises that development should be deliverable. The application was accompanied by a financial appraisal which is being reviewed by an independent financial advisor, acting on behalf of the Local Planning Authority. Initial feedback,

to be followed by a formal report, is that the appraisal confirms the applicant's position.

200. In this case, the regeneration benefits that the scheme will deliver outweigh the inability to deliver affordable housing and were there to be an affordable housing requirement the scheme would not normally be progressed by any developer.

Infrastructure Impact Mitigation

201. Core Strategy policy CP4 requires that infrastructure, services, community and other facilities are improved to meet the requirements of new development, taking into account cumulative impact. Mitigation is now secured via the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Council's charging schedule establishes a charge of £365/m² for residential development outside designated Strategic Development Locations. There is no charge for retail development within existing town centres or other types of development.
202. In addition to meeting their CIL liability there are some site specific impacts that need to be separately mitigated: these are a contribution toward SAMM (paragraph 189) and a contribution for replacement of the tennis courts (paragraph 31). These contributions would usually be secured through a S106 agreement but this is not possible in this case, as the Council is the applicant; hence the commitment takes the form of an Executive Resolution dated 28 January 2016.

Sustainable development

203. Core Strategy policy CP1 requires that proposals contribute towards the goal of zero-carbon development by including appropriate on-site renewable energy features and minimising energy and water consumption (subsection 12a and b). The government have withdrawn the Code for Sustainable Homes and as such this can no longer be sought in line with Policy CC04 (Sustainable Design and Construction). Additionally, new building regulations mean that the council can no longer condition that developments do not exceed 105 litres or less per person per day water consumption which is also specified in CC04. All new homes already have to meet the mandatory national standard set out in the Building Regulations (of 125 litres per person per day). However, where there is a clear local need, local planning authorities can set out Local Plan policies requiring new dwellings to meet the tighter Building Regulations optional requirement of 110 per person per day. Given that there is evidence of water stress within the area which informed the tighter policy requirement at CC04, the council can therefore condition that the optional building regulations figures are met. It is recommended that such a condition be attached to any permission (Condition 52).
204. CC04 further specifies that non-residential development (of more than 100m² gross floorspace) should at least achieve the necessary BREEAM requirements (those set through Building Control for all non-residential buildings). The Council (as per paragraph 2.26 of the MDD) would encourage the proposal to go beyond what is set out in Building Control Standards. Policy CC04 also sets out that non-residential proposals for 100m² floorspace should meet or exceed statutory requirements for water resource management. A BREEAM Strategy Report assessing the retail, hotel and cinema buildings has been submitted which indicates that a minimum standard of 'very good' can be achieved.

205. Given that the proposed scheme involves the development of more than 10 dwellings and more than 1,000m² gross non-residential floorspace, a delivery of a minimum 10% reduction in carbon emissions would be required as per policy CC05 of the MDD. The submitted energy strategy indicates that a reduction of circa 17% over the baseline scheme can be achieved and therefore the scheme would be compliant with CC05 (Condition 53).

Economic Development

206. During the 30 month construction phase an average of 152 (net) jobs per annum will be generated. One the development is operation 283 (net) jobs created when the scheme is fully operational, 96 within the borough. This includes direct jobs (those employed within the development), indirect jobs (those that support the development) and induced jobs (those resulting from direct and indirect) employees spending money in the community. Spending by residents of the new development will gross will generate £2.2 million per annum in the local economy.

207. MDDL Policy TB12 indicates that proposals for major development should 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 end users of the proposal. The applicant has indicated their willingness to develop an Employment and Skills plan which would be secured by Condition 54.

CONCLUSION

The proposal will deliver the next step in regeneration of the town centre, improving the quality of the open space, albeit reduced in size, and providing an appropriate quantum, quality and mix of development for town centre uses to support a vibrant and viable town centre. It is consistent with Development Plan Policy and the guidance in the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD, which seek to secure the growth and renaissance of Wokingham the town centre and can be supported.

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