

Notice of Meeting



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Eastern Area Planning Committee Wednesday 5 August 2020 at 6.30pm

This meeting will be held in a virtual format in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (“the Regulations”)

Please note: As resolved at the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 29 April 2020, public speaking rights have been removed for virtual Council meetings. This right is replaced with the ability to make written submissions. Written submissions are limited to no more than 500 words and must be submitted to the Planning Team by no later than midday on Monday 3 August 2020. Please e-mail your submission to planapps@westberks.gov.uk

The Council will be livestreaming its meetings.

This meeting will be streamed live here: <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/easternareaplanninglive>

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Members Interests

Note: If you consider you may have an interest in any Planning Application included on this agenda then please seek early advice from the appropriate officers.

Date of despatch of Agenda: Tuesday 28 July 2020

FURTHER INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Plans and photographs relating to the Planning Applications to be considered at the meeting can be viewed by clicking the link on the front page of the relevant report.

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact the Planning Team on (01635) 519148

Email: planapps@westberks.gov.uk



Agenda - Eastern Area Planning Committee to be held on Wednesday, 5 August 2020
(continued)

Further information, Planning Applications and Minutes are also available on the Council's website at www.westberks.gov.uk

Any queries relating to the Committee should be directed to Stephen Chard / Jessica Bailiss on (01635) 519462/503124 Email: stephen.chard@westberks.gov.uk / jessica.bailiss@westberks.gov.uk



Agenda - Eastern Area Planning Committee to be held on Wednesday, 5 August 2020
(continued)

- To:** Councillors Jeremy Cottam, Alan Law (Chairman), Tony Linden, Royce Longton, Ross Mackinnon, Alan Macro (Vice-Chairman), Geoff Mayes, Graham Pask and Joanne Stewart
- Substitutes:** Councillors Peter Argyle, Graham Bridgman, Owen Jeffery, Nassar Kessell, Richard Somner and Keith Woodhams
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Agenda

Part I

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1. **Apologies**
To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting.
2. **Minutes** 5 - 32
To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 15 July 2020.
3. **Declarations of Interest**
To remind Members of the need to record the existence and nature of any personal, disclosable pecuniary or other registrable interests in items on the agenda, in accordance with the Members' [Code of Conduct](#).
4. **Schedule of Planning Applications**
(Note: The Chairman, with the consent of the Committee, reserves the right to alter the order of business on this agenda based on public interest and participation in individual applications.)
 - (1) **Application No. & Parish: 20/00674/FUL - Land to the South east of Mortimer Station, Station Road, Mortimer.** 33 - 60

Proposal: Change of use of land and the construction of a 150 space car park with alterations to the highway, landscaping, and associated works.

Location: Land to the South east of Mortimer Station, Station Road, Mortimer.

Applicant: Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council.

Recommendation: The Head of Development and Planning be authorised to refuse planning permission.



Agenda - Eastern Area Planning Committee to be held on Wednesday, 5 August 2020
(continued)

Background Papers

- (a) The West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.
- (b) The West Berkshire District Local Plan (Saved Policies September 2007), the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire, the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire and relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance and Documents.
- (c) Any previous planning applications for the site, together with correspondence and report(s) on those applications.
- (d) The case file for the current application comprising plans, application forms, correspondence and case officer's notes.
- (e) The Human Rights Act.

Sarah Clarke
Service Director (Strategy and Governance)

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact Moira Fraser on telephone (01635) 519045.



DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

EASTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 15 JULY 2020

Councillors Present: Jeremy Cottam, Alan Law (Chairman), Tony Linden, Royce Longton, Ross Mackinnon, Alan Macro (Vice-Chairman), Graham Pask, Joanne Stewart and Keith Woodhams (Substitute) (In place of Geoff Mayes)

Also Present: Michael Butler (Principal Planning Officer), Stephen Chard (Principal Policy Officer), Gareth Dowding (Principal Engineer), Bob Dray (Development Control Team Leader), Kim Maher (Solicitor) and Emma Nutchey (Principal Planning Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Geoff Mayes

PART I

14. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2020 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Jeremy Cottam, Alan Law, Tony Linden, Royce Longton, Ross Mackinnon, Alan Macro, Graham Pask and Jo Stewart declared an interest in Agenda Item 4(1), but reported that, as their interest was a personal or an other registrable interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, they determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

16. Schedule of Planning Applications

(1) Application No. & Parish: 19/01172/OUTMAJ - Land North of The Green, Theale

(Councillors Jeremy Cottam, Alan Law, Tony Linden, Royce Longton, Ross Mackinnon, Graham Pask and Jo Stewart declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 4(1) by virtue of the fact that they knew Richard Benyon who was the former Member of Parliament for Newbury and was closely associated with the Englefield Estate Trust (the applicant). As their interest was personal and not prejudicial or a disclosable pecuniary interest, they determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.)

(Councillor Alan Macro declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 4(1) by virtue of the fact that he lived close to the site for this planning application. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial or a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.)

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(1)) concerning Planning Application 19/01172/OUTMAJ in respect of an outline application for a residential development of up to 104 dwellings. Matters to be considered: Access.

Mrs Emma Nutchey, Principal Planning Officer, introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

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- The matter to be considered was access, but Members should also consider the principle of the development of up to 104 dwellings.
- An illustrative masterplan had been produced alongside parameter plans to establish the developable area, range of building heights and densities etc.
- The update report confirmed the recommendation for approval and reported the addition of an air quality condition and an amendment to the wording of conditions 4 (approved plans) and 22 (road and layout and design standards).

As resolved at the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 29 April 2020, public speaking rights had been removed for virtual Council meetings. This right had replaced with the ability to make written submissions. This decision had been made in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

In accordance with the Extraordinary Council resolution, a written submission had been received from Mr Jonathan Sebbage of Savills, applicant/agent.

The written submission was read out by the Clerk to the Committee as follows:

Applicant/Agent Representation

The written submission of Mr Sebbage was read out as follows:

- This outline planning application had been developed and progressed in response to Policy HSA14 of the Housing Site Allocations DPD, which allocated the site for approximately 100 homes. This had involved consideration of site constraints and opportunities, consultation with the Parish Council and local community, pre and post-application discussions with your officers and consultation with statutory consultees and stakeholders through the planning application process. In developing the proposals, the Englefield Estate had developed a high quality scheme with a positive long-term legacy, for the benefit of the community of Theale and the residents of the development.
- Your officers' report provided a well-balanced assessment of the application and addressed all of the issues raised by neighbours and consultees. There remained some concerns locally however which were addressed further below.

Housing quantum and mix

- Through detailed discussion with your officers, the amount of housing proposed had been reduced from 110 units to ensure that a high-quality scheme, sensitive to its edge of settlement location adjacent to the AONB, would be delivered. The application now proposed up to 104 homes, all of which would be within the settlement boundary, aligning with the allocation for 'approximately 100 homes'. 83% of market housing would be provided as 3 and 4-bed units, ensuring an emphasis on market family housing, in accordance with Policy HSA14.
- In accordance with the Council's requirements, 40% of the new homes would be affordable housing to support local need.

Impact on local infrastructure

- Theale was a sustainable location for new housing as a result of a wide range of services and facilities. The development would increase the number of economically active local residents, resulting in an increase in expenditure, helping to support and sustain local shops, services and facilities, and the prosperity of the village. The development would be liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy which would

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be used by the Council to deliver service and infrastructure improvements that were necessary to address the impact of the increased population.

Links to the surrounding area

- The development included new pedestrian and cycle linkages through and from the site to encourage sustainable travel to local services and facilities. This included a link to the north to provide a direct connection for pupils and visitors to Theale Green Community School. This link responded to and had been agreed with the Council's Highways Officer.

Community benefits

- There would be economic benefits arising from construction jobs and from support provided to local services and facilities by new residents. There would also be a range of environmental benefits including new usable public open space, a net gain in biodiversity and a landscape buffer including new woodland copses and recreational routes.
- The application therefore gave rise to a range of significant social, economic and environmental benefits in line with local planning policy. Please therefore accept your Officer's recommendation and resolve to grant planning permission.

Ward Member Representation

Councillor Alan Macro in addressing the Committee as Ward Member made the following points:

- The site was allocated in the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (HSA DPD) for residential development under Policy HSA14. Councillor Macro had been very concerned by the number of homes proposed but had been reassured that the Policy had an emphasis on providing family homes as there was a shortage in Theale of larger family homes. However, 33% of the proposed housing mix was for one and two bedroom flats and Councillor Macro did not feel they could be regarded as family homes.
- Theale had a large number of flats and a large number of smaller homes. According to census data, 25% of homes in Theale were flats and approval of this application would clearly increase that. Councillor Macro was aware of larger families who had moved from Theale as they could not find a suitably sized home to move to within Theale.
- The site allocation had originally been lower (for approximately 70 homes), but had been increased to approximately 100 homes during the Examination process without consultation.
- The traffic impact was of concern. The traffic survey undertaken did not recognise that there were long queues at peak times on both the A4 and the A340. He therefore felt that the accuracy of the traffic modelling was questionable.
- Councillor Macro was disappointed that emergency access and pedestrian access to the unnamed road to the north of the site emerged approximately one third of the way along the bus park on the opposite side of the road. This created a road safety issue, particularly for school pupils needing to cross the road at this point. The location of this access also meant that another part of the hedge would need to be removed. His preference would be for the access to be located opposite the exit end of the bus park to reduce this safety concern.
- The master plan stated that car parking would be provided as per the Council's parking standards. However, some of these spaces were identified as garages.

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Councillor Macro was concerned that it would be difficult to accommodate the parking spaces needed at the reserved matters stage without encroaching on the landscape buffers and/or the amenity space of the individual dwellings.

- Councillor Macro asked the Committee to refuse the application on the basis that it did not comply with Policy HSA14 as a sufficient number of family homes were not being provided as required by the Policy.

Member Questions of the Ward Member

The Committee had no questions to ask of the Ward Member.

Questions to Officers

Councillor Graham Pask referred to the consultation response from Thames Water. This stated no objection subject to a condition to secure an upgrade to the water network or phasing plan for occupation to ensure that new properties had sufficient water pressure. This was captured within condition 14. He queried whether it was for Thames Water to provide the necessary infrastructure.

In response, Mrs Nutchey explained that Thames Water were concerned that there was not sufficient capacity within existing infrastructure to accommodate the development without it impacting on water pressure. They were therefore seeking a strategy and for the necessary works to be put in place to mitigate against this concern. The National Planning Practice Guidance stated the need to ensure that mains water and waste water infrastructure was in place for new developments. The proposed condition was to alleviate potential harm arising from the development.

Councillor Pask next referred to car parking. The Local Plan stated that garages should not be counted as parking spaces and there was a low use nationally of garages for parking cars. He queried whether it would be possible for a condition at the reserved matters stage to ensure parking standards were met in full.

Mrs Nutchey confirmed that car parking was a reserved matter and only illustrative drawings were provided at this stage. The applicant had sought to show that the necessary number of spaces could be provided. The detail would be at the reserved matter stage. Amended condition 22 stated the need for car parking requirements to be met in line with the standard (Policy P1).

Gareth Dowding, Principal Engineer, added that car parking had been discussed fully with Planning Officers. As stated, it would be looked at in detail at the reserved matters stage to ensure that the parking standards were met.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon noted that Theale Parish Council objected as the site was outside of the settlement boundary. He queried if this was the case as the report stated otherwise.

Mrs Nutchey confirmed that the site was within the settlement boundary. It was included at the point at which the settlement boundary was reviewed. Bob Dray, Development Control Team Leader, added that the settlement boundary incorporated the developable area of the site, but not the landscape buffer to the west.

Councillor Jeremy Cottam queried if the application met the policy requirement for family homes. Mrs Nutchey explained that HSA14 did state the need for an emphasis to be placed on family homes, but it did not state the quantity. However, she did point out that 67% of the proposed dwellings would be houses. The houses would come in a range of sizes in order to meet the broad spectrum of need in the local area. There would be smaller units, but Housing Officers were eager to see smaller units, particularly for the affordable units as this was an area of demand.

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Councillor Cottam followed this by querying how the 40% affordable housing units would be provided and distributed. Mrs Nutchey explained that this had not been identified at this stage. However, the delivery of 40% affordable housing would be secured via a legal agreement. The dwelling mix and tenure mix of the affordable homes would be considered at reserved matters, and would be determined by the housing need at that point in time.

Councillor Macro welcomed the inclusion of the water infrastructure condition. However, he queried whether Thames Water had commented on waste water disposal as the nearby pumping station had been overwhelmed several times in recent years. Mrs Nutchey advised that Thames Water had not commented on this matter.

Councillor Alan Law queried whether a condition or informative could be added to cover the issue of waste water disposal. Mrs Nutchey advised that Officers would need to liaise with Thames Water on a condition, but it could be included as an informative at this stage. Mr Dray added that the key point was to ensure water infrastructure was in place to align with the phasing of the development. Thames Water had a statutory duty to connect the development to its water supply and this would happen naturally between the developer and Thames Water at a suitable time. This was separate to the planning system.

Councillor Law stated that it was important to ensure that water infrastructure was in place for developments. He queried if the cost of doing so would be met by developments or the Community Infrastructure Levy. Mrs Nutchey advised that the developer needed to ensure that an adequate system was in place.

Councillor Royce Longton referred to Condition 21 – Electric Vehicle Charging Points. He was supportive of this condition which would ensure that a charging point was installed for every house with communal points provided for apartments. However, he queried if this condition was secured as informative 7 stated that the developer should be urged to consider the provision of electric vehicle charging facilities.

Mrs Nutchey confirmed that the condition carried the necessary weight to ensure that electric vehicle charging points would be delivered. The informative was requested by Environmental Health to encourage uptake, but the condition was necessary in any event to comply with policy.

Councillor Jo Stewart referred to some of the concerns raised by Councillor Macro as Ward Member. She sought clarification on the increase in the number of homes from 70 to up to 104 dwellings. Councillor Law clarified that the figure of approximately 100 homes had been resolved at a meeting of Full Council in allocating the site.

Councillor Stewart next referenced the point in relation to access, in particular pedestrian access for school children. If outline permission was granted by the Committee then would it be possible to relocate the access to ensure pedestrian safety.

In response, Mr Dowding explained that access was for the detailed design stage. Highways Officers would assess if the access was compliant with highway safety requirements. If that assessment identified safety concerns then a request would be made for the access to be relocated to a more appropriate location.

Councillor Law also referred to a point made by the Ward Member in relation to traffic queues. He queried whether queuing traffic had been identified in the traffic modelling.

Mr Dowding advised that the highways assessment of the modelling found that some traffic queues that occurred had not been fully identified in the traffic survey undertaken by the applicant. However, it was still considered to be a reasonably robust and acceptable traffic assessment.

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The queues in question were predominantly caused by issues on the M4 and these went beyond the remit of the Council and the developer. The local authority was looking at ways to resolve this separately from any planning applications. Mr Dowding confirmed that Highway Officers would work closely with the developer to put in place an appropriate scheme subject to approval.

Debate

Councillor Pask opened the debate by pointing out that the principle of development had been established in the HSA DPD (the Local Plan) for a site that was within the settlement boundary.

Councillor Pask felt that the vehicular access point was reasonably well placed and he was content with the proposals at this stage. He noted the concerns raised in relation to pedestrian safety and it would therefore be necessary for the negotiation process, prior to the reserved matters application, to give careful consideration to pedestrian access and safety.

Councillor Macro accepted that the principle of development had been approved. However, he remained concerned over the numbers. The HSA DPD allocation was for approximately 100 homes and this application was for up to 104 dwellings. This was not overly significant in isolation but it was a concern when considering that originally, 70 homes were identified for the site so it was a further stretch. However, Councillor Macro's greatest concern was the housing mix which he felt was inadequate in terms of the provision of family homes.

Councillor Cottam felt that safety was the greatest point of concern. He felt that the Committee should insist upon the pedestrian access point being moved at this stage. He felt that the applicant had not been thorough on highways matters, i.e. their traffic survey.

Councillor Pask proposed acceptance of Officers' recommendation to grant conditional planning permission subject to the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement. This would include the additional and amended conditions in the update report. As part of this proposal he asked for an informative to be added to request that the pedestrian access to the north be relocated to a safer location to be agreed with the Highways Officer.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Tony Linden.

Mrs Nutchey explained that the legal agreement would secure the provision of a pedestrian route. She added that a route had been proposed by the applicant which had been assessed by Highways Officers and found to be safe. It was therefore listed as part of the approved plans in Condition 4. However, if Members still had concerns on this matter then the reference could be removed from Condition 4 and the pedestrian access could then be determined in detail as part of negotiations on the S106 legal agreement.

Councillor Pask as proposer and Councillor Linden as seconder confirmed they were content with this approach in relation to pedestrian access and safety.

RESOLVED that the Head of Development and Planning be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the conditions listed below and provided that a Section 106 Agreement has been completed by 15th September 2020 (or such longer period that might be authorised by the Head of Development and Planning, in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Eastern Area Planning Committee).

Conditions

1. Approval of reserved matters

Details of the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be submitted to and approved in

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writing by the local planning authority before any development takes place. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To comply with Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. Time limit for reserved matters

Application(s) for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the local planning authority not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

3. Commencement of development (outline)

The development hereby permitted shall take place not later than two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.

Reason: To comply with Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

4. Approved Plans (amended)

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawing numbers:

- Site Location Plan drawing number 6027T/PL01;
- Proposed Site Access Arrangements, including visibility splays 60555677.001;
- Proposed Site Access Arrangements 60555677.002 Rev. A;
- Northern Access Visibility Splays 60555677.005;
- Indicative Building Density 6027T/PL12D;
- Parameter Building Heights 6027T/PL07C;
- Phase 1 habitat Survey report dated July 2016 by Ecoconsult Wildlife Consultancy;
- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey by Lockhart Garratt ref 17-3366 V1;
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment by Lockhart Garratt ref 18-2958 V1;
- Noise Impact Assessment dated March 2019 by Aecom;
- Air Quality Assessment dated March 2019 by Aecom.

The reserved matters submitted pursuant to condition 1 shall generally accord with the following plans:

- Masterplan 6027T/PL02C;
- Illustrative Landscape Masterplan drawing 3959/03/18-0155 v6;
- Character Areas 6027T/PL06C;
- Indicative Green Infrastructure and Boundary Treatments

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6027T/PL05D;

- Landuse Access and Movement 6027T/PL03B.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.

5. **Tree protection – construction precautions**

No development or other operations shall commence on site until details of the proposed access, hard surfacing, drainage and services providing for the protection of the root zones of trees to be retained has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter all works must be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the protection of trees identified for retention at the site in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies CS14, CS18 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026. A pre-commencement condition is necessary because insufficient detailed information accompanies the application; tree protection installation measures and works may be required to be undertaken throughout the construction phase and so it is necessary to approve these details before any development takes place in order to ensure the protection of trees from the outset.

6. **Tree protection**

No development (including site clearance and any other preparatory works) shall commence on site until a scheme for the protection of trees to be retained has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such a scheme shall include a plan showing the location of the protective fencing, and shall specify the type of protective fencing. All such fencing shall be erected prior to any development works taking place and at least 2 working days notice shall be given to the Local Planning Authority that it has been erected. It shall be maintained and retained for the full duration of works or until such time as agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. No activities or storage of materials whatsoever shall take place within the protected areas without the prior written agreement of the Local Planning Authority.

Note: The protective fencing should be as specified at Chapter 6 and detailed in figure 2 of B.S.5837:2012.

Reason: To ensure the enhancement of the development and the protection of the AONB by the retention of existing trees and natural features during the construction phase in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies CS14, CS18 and CS19 of West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026. A pre-commencement condition is necessary because insufficient detailed information accompanies the application; tree protection installation measures may be required to be undertaken throughout the construction phase and so it is necessary to approve these details before any development takes place.

7. Arboricultural supervision

No development shall commence (including site clearance and any other preparatory works) until the applicant has secured the implementation of an arboricultural watching brief in accordance with a written scheme of site monitoring, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the enhancement of the development and the protection of the AONB by the retention of existing trees and natural features during the construction phase in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies CS14, CS18 and CS19 of West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026. A pre-commencement condition is necessary because insufficient detailed information accompanies the application; tree protection installation measures and site supervision works may be required to be undertaken throughout the construction phase and so it is necessary to approve these details before any development takes place.

8. Landscaping

No development shall commence until a detailed scheme of landscaping for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities, an implementation programme and details of written specifications including cultivation and other operations involving tree, shrub and grass establishment. The scheme shall ensure;

- (a) Details of soil preparation, plant protection, watering and weeding.
- (b) Completion of the approved landscape scheme within the first planting season following completion of the final property.
- (c) Any trees shrubs or plants that die or become seriously damaged within five years of this development shall be replaced in the following year by plants of the same size and species.

Reason: To ensure the implementation of a satisfactory scheme of landscaping in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies CS14, CS18 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026. A pre-commencement condition is required because details of the landscaping need to be designed into the overall layout of the scheme.

9. Drainage

No development shall commence until details of sustainable drainage measures to manage surface water within the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall thereafter be implemented in full before any of the dwellings hereby approved are occupied. These details shall:

- a) Incorporate the implementation of Sustainable Drainage methods (SuDS) in accordance with the Non-Statutory

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Technical Standards for SuDS (March 2015), the SuDS Manual C753 (2015) and West Berkshire Council local standards, particularly the WBC SuDS Supplementary Planning Document December 2018;

- b) Include and be informed by a ground investigation survey which establishes the soil characteristics, infiltration rate and groundwater levels;
- c) Include attenuation measures to retain rainfall run-off within the site with discharge from the site at no greater than the 1 in 1 year Greenfield run-off rate;
- d) Include construction drawings, cross-sections and specifications of all proposed SuDS measures within the site;
- e) Include run-off calculations, discharge rates, infiltration and storage capacity calculations for the proposed SuDS measures based on a 1 in 100 year storm +40% for climate change;
- f) Include pre-treatment methods to prevent any pollution or silt entering SuDS features or causing any contamination to the soil or groundwater;
- g) Ensure any permeable paved areas are designed and constructed in accordance with manufacturers guidelines.
- h) Include details of how the SuDS measures will be maintained and managed after completion. These details shall be provided as part of a handover pack for subsequent purchasers and owners of the property/premises;
- i) Include a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) for developments located in areas at risk of flooding (Flood Zone 2 and 3 or surface water) or developments larger than 1 hectare;
- j) Include measures with reference to Environmental issues which protect or enhance the ground water quality and provide new habitats where possible.
- k) Apply for an Ordinary Watercourse Consent in case of surface water discharge into a watercourse (i.e stream, ditch etc)
- l) Attenuation storage measures must have a 300mm freeboard above maximum design water level. Surface conveyance features must have a 150mm freeboard above maximum design water level;
- m) Any design calculations should take into account an allowance of an additional 10% increase of paved areas over the lifetime of the development;
- n) Details of catchments and flows discharging into and across the site and how these flows will be managed and routed through the development and where the flows exit the site both pre-development and post-development must be provided.

Reason: To ensure that surface water will be managed in a sustainable manner; to prevent the increased risk of flooding; to improve and protect water quality, habitat and amenity and ensure future maintenance of the surface water drainage system can be, and

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is carried out in an appropriate and efficient manner. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS16 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Part 4 of Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006) and Sustainable Drainage Systems Supplementary Planning Document (Dec 2018). A pre-condition is necessary because insufficient detailed information accompanies the application; sustainable drainage measures may require work to be undertaken throughout the construction phase and so it is necessary to approve these details before any development takes place.

10. **Landscape and ecological management plan (LEMPs)**

No development shall commence until a landscape and ecological management plan (LEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The content of the LEMP shall include the following:

- (a) Description and evaluation of features to be managed to include all landscaped areas outside of domestic properties, both existing and proposed, and the areas of woodland for the next 25 years.
- (b) Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management.
- (c) Aims and objectives of management to include provision for the implementation of the measures and actions recommended in section 5 of the Ecology report by Ecoconsult Wildlife Consultancy and section 9 of the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey by Lockhart Garratt with regards to carrying out site works and the opportunities for biodiversity enhancements.
- (d) Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.
- (e) Prescriptions for management actions.
- (f) Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period).
- (g) Details of the body or organization responsible for implementation of the plan.
- (h) Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.

The LEMP shall also include details of the legal and funding mechanisms by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer with the management bodies responsible for its delivery. The plan shall also set out (*where the results from monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the LEMP are not being met*) how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme. The approved plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To conserve, enhance and provide a net gain in biodiversity and to ensure the long term management of existing and proposed landscaping. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS14, CS17, CS18 and CS19 of

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the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006). A pre-condition is necessary because insufficient detailed information accompanies the application and damage to wildlife and plants may occur if the details are not implemented at the point of commencement.

11. Lighting Strategy

No dwelling shall be occupied until a biodiversity-related lighting strategy for the development has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The lighting strategy shall identify those areas that are particularly sensitive for bats and wildlife and any measures necessary to minimise and mitigate the impact of lighting on them. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the approved details and shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with those details. No other external lighting shall be installed without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority granted by way of a planning application.

Reason: To ensure the protection of wildlife and minimise the impact of light pollution on the surrounding countryside. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS14, CS17 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), and Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006).

12. Bat and bird boxes

No dwelling shall be occupied until details showing the location and types of at least 10 bat and 10 bird boxes to be incorporated into the dwellings or provided within the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the dwellings shall not be occupied until the bat and bird boxes have been installed/constructed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the protection of bats and birds. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS14 and CS17 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), and Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006).

13. Time limit on submission of a reserved matters application before further ecological surveys are required

If the submission of a reserved matters application pursuant to conditions 1-3 of this permission is made more than 2 years after the date of this permission, updated ecological surveys to establish if there have been any changes in the presence of protected species and identify any likely new ecological impacts that might arise shall support the reserved matters application and mitigation measures designed accordingly. Additionally any previously approved ecological measures secured through the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (Condition 10) shall be reviewed and, where necessary, amended and updated in accordance with the updated ecological surveys. All works shall then be carried out in accordance with the new approved

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ecological measures and timetable.

Reason: To ensure the protection of wildlife. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS14 and CS17 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), and Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006).

14. Thames Water

No dwelling shall be occupied until written confirmation has been provided that either all water network upgrades required to accommodate the additional flows to serve the development have been completed or a housing and infrastructure phasing plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in conjunction with Thames Water. Where a housing and infrastructure phasing plan is agreed no occupation shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed housing and infrastructure phasing plan.

Reason: The development may lead to no/low water pressure and network reinforcement works are anticipated to be necessary to ensure that sufficient capacity is made available to accommodate additional demand anticipated from the new development.

15. Refuse storage

No development shall commence until details of the provision for the storage of refuse and recycling materials for the dwellings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No dwelling shall be occupied until the refuse and recycling facilities have been provided in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained for this purpose thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that there is adequate and safe refuse/recycling facilities within the site. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS13 and CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006). A pre-condition is required as insufficient information has been submitted with the application and collection and storage points may impact on the internal road layout. For this reason it must be considered at design stage.

16. Minerals extraction

No development shall commence until the following has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the methods agreed throughout the construction period:

- (a) A method for ensuring that minerals that can be viably recovered during the development are recovered and put to beneficial use;
- (b) A method to record the quantity of recovered mineral (for re-use on site or off-site) and the reporting of this quantity to the Local Planning Authority.

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Reason: In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and saved policies 1 and 2 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire which seek to utilise existing mineral deposits. A pre-commencement condition is required as the removal of such deposits, where possible, will be one of the first operations on site.

17. Unexpected contamination

If any previously unidentified contaminated land is found during demolition and/or construction activities, it shall be reported immediately in writing to the Local Planning Authority (LPA). Appropriate investigation and risk assessment shall be undertaken, and any necessary remediation measures shall be submitted and approved in writing by the LPA. These submissions shall be prepared by a competent person (a person with a recognised relevant qualification, sufficient experience in dealing with the type(s) of pollution or land instability, and membership of a relevant professional organisation), and conducted in accordance with current best practice. The remediation scheme shall ensure that, after remediation, as a minimum, the land shall not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Thereafter, any remediation measures shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA, no dwelling shall not be occupied until any approved remediation measures have been completed and a verification report to demonstrate the effectiveness of the remediation has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.

Reason: To ensure that any unexpected contamination encountered during the development is suitably assessed and dealt with, such that it does not pose an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment. This condition is applied in accordance with paragraphs 170, 178, 179 and 180 the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policy OVS.5 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

18. Noise impacts

No development shall commence until a scheme for protecting the proposed dwellings from noise from traffic on the adjacent roads has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any works which form part of the scheme approved by the Local Planning Authority shall be completed before any permitted dwelling is occupied.

Reason: As occupiers of the development, without such a scheme, are likely to suffer from noise caused by the traffic to an unacceptable degree. This condition is required in accordance with the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy (2006-2026). A pre-commencement condition is required as the mitigation measures may need to be built into the fabric of the dwellings.

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19. **Pest control**

No development shall commence until a scheme detailing rat, vermin and other pest control measures have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include:

- (a) Details of the methods used to reduce existing rat populations and discourage dispersal of rats from the site during the groundworks and construction phase
- (b) A methodology for assessing the ongoing effectiveness of different rat and vermin and pest deterrent methods;
- (c) An objective methodology for assessing when rodenticides / insecticide shall be applied;
- (d) Details of control measures and ongoing assessment of effectiveness in relation to mammalian pests;
- (e) Provision for submission of records relating to the implementation of the foregoing measures to the Local Planning Authority.

The approved scheme shall thereafter be implemented for the duration of the construction activities associated with the delivery of the development

Reason: To minimise the impact of pest migration to surrounding areas during site clearance and groundworks and to protect the amenity of neighbouring occupiers in accordance with the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework. A pre-commencement condition is required as the approved measures need to be implemented once works commence in order to be effective.

20. **Construction Method Statement**

No development shall take place until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details. The statement shall provide for:

- (a) Temporary site access arrangements during construction;
- (b) The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- (c) Loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- (d) Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- (e) The erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing;
- (f) Wheel washing facilities;
- (g) Measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction;
- (h) Measures to control noise generated during the construction process;
- (i) A scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works;
- (j) Haul routes for large vehicles and delivery times to avoid school opening and closure times.

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Reason: To safeguard the amenity of adjoining land uses and occupiers and in the interests of highway safety. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS5 and CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Policy TRANS 1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007). A pre-commencement condition is required as insufficient details have been submitted with the application and these measures need to be implemented on commencement to ensure there is no adverse impacts from the development during the construction phase.

21. Electric Vehicle Charging Points:

No development above ground level shall commence until details of electric vehicle charging points have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No dwelling shall be occupied until the associated electric vehicle charging point has been provided in accordance with the approved drawings. An Electric Vehicle Charging Point shall be provided for every house with communal points provided for apartments. The charging points shall thereafter be retained and kept available for the potential use of an electric car.

Reason: To promote the use of electric vehicle. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS13 and CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Policy P1 of the Housing Site Allocation DPD, Policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007) and the Climate Change Emergency.

22. Road and Layout and Design Standards (amended)

The detailed layout of the site shall comply with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of road and footpath design and vehicle parking and turning provision (in accordance with Policy P1). The developer shall enter into a S278 / S38 Agreement for the adoption of the site for all access roads serving more than five houses. This condition shall apply notwithstanding any indications to these matters which have been given in the current application.

Reason: In the interest of road safety, the flow of traffic, residential amenity, and to ensure waste collection. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Policy P1 of the Housing Site Allocations DPD 2006-2026, and Policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

23. Vehicle parking provided to standards

No development shall commence until details of the vehicle parking and turning space/areas have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall show how the parking spaces are to be surfaced and marked out. No dwelling shall be occupied until the associated vehicle parking and turning spaces/areas have been provided in accordance with the approved

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details. The parking and/or turning space shall thereafter be kept available for parking (of private motor cars and/or light goods vehicles) at all times.

Reason: To ensure the development is provided with adequate parking facilities in order to reduce the likelihood of roadside parking which would adversely affect road safety and the flow of traffic. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy, Policy P1 of the Housing Site Allocations DPD 2006-2026, and Policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007). A pre-commencement condition is required to ensure the parking is designed into the scheme and to ensure sufficient provision is made.

24. **Access construction before development**

No dwelling shall be first occupied (unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority) until the vehicular, pedestrian and cycle accesses to the development, and associated engineering operations, have been completed in accordance with the approved details, and under the terms of a Section 38 / 278 Agreement. Thereafter the visibility splays shown on the Proposed Site Access Arrangements including visibility splays by AECOM 60555677.001 shall be kept free of all obstructions to visibility above a height of 0.6 metres above carriageway level at all times.

Reason: To ensure that the access into the site are constructed before the approved buildings in the interest of highway safety. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and Policies CS13 and CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

25. **Gradient of private drive**

The gradient of private drives shall not exceed 1 in 8 or, where buildings are likely to be occupied by the mobility impaired, 1 in 12.

Reason: To ensure that adequate access to parking spaces and garages is provided. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

26. **Cycle storage**

No development above ground level shall commence until details of the cycle parking and storage space have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No dwelling shall be occupied until the associated cycle parking and storage space has been provided in accordance with the approved details and retained for this purpose at all times.

Reason: To ensure that there is adequate and safe cycle storage space within the site. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS13 of the West

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Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

27. Schedule of materials for access road

The development of the access roads shall not commence until a schedule of materials to be used in the access roads and car parking areas has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This condition shall apply irrespective of any indications as to these matters which have been detailed in the current application the use shall not commence until the access and car park has been constructed in accordance with the approved schedule.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the access is appropriate to the character of the area. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026). A pre-commencement condition is required because access needs to be undertaken as the first development operation.

28. Travel Plan

No development above ground level shall commence until a Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan shall be implemented in full from the development first being brought into use. Its provision shall ensure that it is reviewed (and updated if necessary) within 6 months of first implementation. After that the Travel Plan shall be annually reviewed and updated and all reasonable practicable steps made to achieve the agreed targets and measures within the timescales set out in the plan and any subsequent revisions.

Reason: To ensure the development reduces reliance on private motor vehicles and provides the appropriate level of vehicle parking. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS13 and CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007), Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006) and Climate Change Emergency. A pre-commencement condition is required as insufficient details have been submitted with the application and measures will need to be put into place prior to first occupation.

29. Air Quality (additional)

No development shall commence until a scheme for protecting the proposed dwellings from air pollution from traffic on the adjacent roads has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any works which form part of the scheme approved by the authority shall be completed before any permitted dwelling is occupied and thereafter retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: As occupiers of the development, without such a scheme, are likely to suffer from poor air quality caused by the traffic to an unacceptable degree. The condition seeks to protect future occupiers

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in accordance with the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policy OVS.5 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007). A pre-commencement condition is necessary as such measures need to be designed into the fabric of the dwellings.

Heads of Terms for Section 106 Agreement

1. **Affordable housing**

To provide 40% provision for affordable housing with a 30/70 intermediate/social rent split. The agreement is to be worded flexibly to allow for the size and mix of the units to be secured at reserved matters stage dependant on local need.

2. **Public open space**

To secure the creation, retention and governance of a landscape buffer and public open space in accordance with drawing titled Indicative Green Infrastructure and Boundary Treatments 6027T/PL05D.

3. **Provision of a pedestrian link**

To secure the provision of a pedestrian route across the unnamed road to the north in accordance with drawing titled Potential Pedestrian Crossing on Unnamed Road, drawing number 60555677.001.

Informatives

1. This decision has been made in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development having regard to Development Plan policies and available guidance to secure high quality appropriate development. In this application whilst there has been a need to balance conflicting considerations, the local planning authority has worked proactively with the applicant to secure and accept what is considered to be a development which improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.
2. The development hereby approved results in a requirement to make payments to the Council as part of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) procedure. A Liability Notice setting out further details, and including the amount of CIL payable will be sent out separately from this Decision Notice. You are advised to read the Liability Notice and ensure that a Commencement Notice is submitted to the authority prior to the commencement of the development. Failure to submit the Commencement Notice will result in the loss of any exemptions claimed, and the loss of any right to pay by instalments, and additional costs to you in the form of surcharges. For further details see the website at www.westberks.gov.uk/cil
3. Thames Water: There are water mains crossing or close to your development. Thames Water do NOT permit the building over or construction within 3m of water mains. If you're planning significant works near our mains (within 3m) we'll need to check that your development doesn't reduce capacity, limit repair or maintenance activities during and after construction, or inhibit the services we provide in any other way. The applicant is advised to read our guide working near or diverting our pipes. <https://developers.thameswater.co.uk/Developing-a-large-site/Planning-your-development/Working-near-or-diverting-our-pipes>

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4. Thames Water: If you are planning on using mains water for construction purposes, it's important you let Thames Water know before you start using it, to avoid potential fines for improper usage. More information and how to apply can be found online at thameswater.co.uk/buildingwater.
5. Thames Water: Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development.
6. Construction Noise: The attention of the applicant is drawn to the requirements of Section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 in respect of the minimisation of noise on construction and demolition sites. Application, under Section 61 of the Act, for prior consent to the works, can be made to the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager.
7. Provision of Vehicle Charging Points (Air Quality/Public Health)
As an opportunity to improve air quality we would urge the developer to consider the provision of electric vehicle charging facilities for use by the occupiers and their visitors.
8. The applicant is reminded that, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (section 1), it is an offence to remove, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. Planning consent for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this act. Trees and scrub are likely to contain nesting birds between 1st March and 31st August inclusive. Trees and scrub are present on the application site and are to be assumed to contain nesting birds between the above dates, unless a recent survey has been undertaken by a competent ecologist to assess the nesting bird activity on site during this period and has shown it is absolutely certain that nesting birds are not present.

OR, if a Section 106 Agreement is not completed, to REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION for the reasons listed below.

Refusal Reasons (If Section 106 Agreement not completed)

1. Planning obligation

The application fails to provide an acceptable planning obligations under section 106 of the Act to deliver necessary infrastructure and mitigation measures, including:

- (a) 40% on-site provision of affordable housing, without which the proposal would be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Policy CS6 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), and the Planning Obligations SPD (2014);
- (b) Public open space and landscape buffer (provision and governance), without which the proposal would be contrary to the NPPF, Policies ADPP1, ADPP4, ADPP5, CS14, CS18 and CS19, Policies C1 and HSA14 of the Housing Site Allocations (HSA) DPD 2006-2026, RL.1, RL.2 and RL.3 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007), and the Planning Obligations SPD (2014).

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- (c) A pedestrian link from the site across the un-named road to the north, without which the proposal would be contrary to the NPPF, Policies CS13 and CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026, Policies GS1 and HSA14 of the HSA DPD, and the Planning Obligations SPD (2014).

(2) Application No. & Parish: 20/00737/COMIND - Land at Shalford Farm Brimpton

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(2)) concerning Planning Application 20/00737/COMIND in respect of a full planning application for the conversion and redevelopment of existing land and buildings to create a mixed-use development comprising restaurant, estate farm shop, overnight accommodation, bakery, fermentary, cookery school and event space (local food production and ancillary education facility) and a biomass boiler together with associated works including the demolition of the existing garages and workshop building.

Mr Michael Butler, Principal Planning Officer, introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- The Development Control Manager had requested that this application be determined by Committee as the Eastern Area Planning Committee had refused the previous application for the site. The applicant had taken the decision to appeal but had advised that the appeal would be withdrawn if planning permission was granted for this revised scheme.
- The Planning Officer recommendation was to refuse planning permission for the reasons outlined in the report. In summary, the scale and mix of commercial uses was considered more appropriate for town centre use and would create traffic concerns. Secondly, a sequential test had not been undertaken.
- The Highways Officer objected and also recommended refusal as detailed in both the committee report and update report. This was on the basis that the high level of mixed commercial use on the site would generate an unacceptable level of private car traffic on rural roads which went contrary to extant policy in what was considered to be an unsustainable location. The Highways Officer also considered that regard should be had to the declared Climate Change Emergency.
- Overdevelopment was added as a reason for refusal by Members for the previous application. Officers had not included it as a reason for refusing this application as the scheme had reduced in size.

As resolved at the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 29 April 2020, public speaking rights had been removed for virtual Council meetings. This right had replaced with the ability to make written submissions. This decision had been made in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

In accordance with the Extraordinary Council resolution, written submissions had been received from Mr Paul Woodley, Chairman of Wasing Parish Meeting (adjoining parish), Mr John Beach, Ms Stephanie Ansell, Mr William Fugard, Ms Bryony Fugard and Ms Harriet Lees, supporters, and Mr Andrew Perkins, Wasing Estate - applicant/agent.

The written submissions were read out by the Clerk to the Committee as follows:

Adjoining Parish Council Representation

The written submission of Mr Woodley was read out as follows:

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- The main central hub of the Wasing Estate was located within our Parish and we were only too acutely aware that the financial challenge facing rural estates such as this, was becoming more and more difficult by the day. The proposed development at Shalford Farm would turn a run-down eyesore into a lovely, local rural enterprise which would no doubt help support the Wasing Estate into the future, securing diversified income, protecting the farming operation and in turn protecting jobs. We all know only too well at the moment that job retention and creation was right at the top of the government's agenda.
- The idea of having a farm shop and restaurant that was using fresh organic produce direct from Wasing Farm should be recognised, appreciated and applauded, as more and more people see the benefits of reducing, or in this case, eliminating food miles, helping the environment and healthy eating. There would be many people who would relish the chance to go and buy some fresh vegetables that they had seen growing in the local fields.
- With the current economic outlook, a positive development such as this, that will provide jobs and economic stimulus to the rural economy, should be welcomed whole heartedly and fully supported.
- Our Parish Meeting was in full support of the proposal, recognised the significant efforts the Wasing Estate had gone to in order to reduce the size and scale of the site from the previous application and would ask that the committee view it in a positive light and realise all the benefits such a scheme would bring to the local community and economy.

Supporter Representations

A summary of the written submission of the supporters was read out as follows:

- Three written submissions have been received in support of the application. The supporters included local residents and small business owners. The full submissions had been provided to Members; the following was a summary of the points raised.
- The facility would be welcomed and well supported by the local community.
- The community wanted locally sourced produce, such as that produced by Wasing Estate. It would encourage healthy eating and support local producers. This also facilitated improvements for local wildlife.
- It provided an alternative to corporate brands that invaded the high streets and villages.
- Both the farm shop and restaurant would be a much welcomed addition to the local area. A rural restaurant and farm shop would be a positive contribution to the rural community.
- The development would provide employment opportunities. The application would help sustain the rural economy and community in changing times such as these.
- With levels of working from home increasing, it was essential that rural communities were able to flex and adjust. The countryside could not just be reserved for long term residents to walk their dogs, it had to grow and become a part of a dynamic and changing future.
- The development would provide a much needed meeting place for local people. Rural hubs such as this should be supported. There was not a huge amount going on in the village of Brimpton. The proposals would be a lovely addition to the area, and would give the community a local option for such facilities.
- The proposal would be a vital and sustainable proposal for the residents of Brimpton, Wasing and Aldermaston.
- The proposals would renovate the run-down farm buildings, which were currently an eye-sore and would benefit from refurbishment.

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- All three supporters believed the proposals should therefore be approved.

Applicant/Agent Representation

The written submission of Mr Perkins was read out as follows:

- The Shalford Farm development was a key part of securing Wasing Estate's future. It would support the organic farming through providing an outlet for locals to buy fresh organic produce grown on their doorstep with zero food miles and to supply the restaurant delivering fresh organic meals for locals to enjoy with family. The accommodation and restaurant also supported the main wedding and events venue, which was facing increased competition and needed to continue as one of the leading venues in the country, something to be proud of.
- Following the previous rejection, we have listened to you, we have worked with the local Parish Council, whom were now in support and we have critically reviewed the project. As such, the revised proposal before you, achieved the following:
 1. Complete removal of the Wedding Retail and Showcase element, dramatically reducing the retail floor space by 73%.
 2. Reduced the overall scale of the Dutch barn and reduced its height by 1.5m to only 8m.
 3. Completely removed a whole building (the narrow barn) from the development.
 4. Reduces the overall floor area by almost 20% to just 1,337sqm
The reduction from the previous application could be seen clearly in the blue outline on the elevations.
- The Planning Officer was recommending refusal for the same two reasons:
 1. Unsustainable location
 2. No Sequential Test
- The Case Officer had confirmed that he would support a scheme of less than 1000sqm. The Planning Officer's reliance on 1000sqm as the threshold of acceptability was based on the notion that this represented the applicable definition of what was "major development" and that major development was unacceptable in this location and would require a Sequential Test. To adopt this black and white approach was wrong. By doing so one would ignore:
 1. The clear advice of the NPPF which stated "the use of the sequential test should recognise that certain main town centre uses had particular market and locational requirements which meant that they might only be accommodated in specific locations"
 2. the synergies with the Estate (the scheme could not be relocated to a main town centre)
 3. the operation of an innovative Travel Plan (which included an electric shuttle bus)
 4. the Applicant's willingness to accept a condition tying the site to the rest of the Estate.
- You would fully appreciate that accommodation provision has to be supplied at the location it was serving, in this case the wedding venue. An Estate Farm shop and restaurant utilising fresh organic produce direct from the estate fields whilst supporting an existing hospitality venue must also be located on the estate.
- When this Committee considered the previous proposal there was unanimous support for the principle of redeveloping this site, yet there was a feeling that it was

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just a bit too big. We have listened to you and you would see the new scheme had been very significantly reduced in scale and the intensity of the uses. The Highways Officer was content that the local road network could accommodate the amount of traffic that would be generated.

- An appeal had been lodged against the refusal of the original scheme – that appeal would be withdrawn if planning permission was granted for the revised and reduced scheme this evening.

Ward Member Representation

Councillor Dominic Boeck in addressing the Committee as Ward Member made the following points:

- He lived in Brimpton Parish. Shalford Farm was located on the boundary between Brimpton and Wasing, and was only a short distance away from Aldermaston. It was therefore located in the heart of his Ward.
- There had been strong interest among residents in the plans for the Farm. While there had been concerns raised in relation to the first application, neither Brimpton Parish or Aldermaston Parish had objected to this application. The new plan was well received by residents.
- Councillor Boeck was supportive for a number of reasons:
 - If the application was approved, it would result in the restoration of many dilapidated farm buildings which held some historical value. Approval would bring the buildings and land back into use.
 - Wasing Estates had exciting plans for the Farm. Post restoration, there would be the creation of new jobs. While AWE was only a few miles distant and a large employer, employment opportunities from the rural economy were more modest. The ability to create rural based jobs was a huge asset.
 - West Berkshire Council was doing all it could to protect and enhance the economy during particularly challenging times from Covid-19. Opportunities should therefore be seized to create employment and this application would support that both directly and in the supply chain that would feed the enterprise.
 - Approval would offer greater choice to local residents and the ability to purchase local produce.

Member Questions of the Ward Member

Councillor Keith Woodhams referred to the point made in the applicant's submission that 'The Highways Officer is content that the local road network can accommodate the amount of traffic that would be generated'. He asked Councillor Boeck to comment on that as that viewpoint differed from the concerns raised by the Highways Officer.

Councillor Boeck commented that traffic flow was rarely interrupted in the local area and queuing traffic was not an issue. The only issue he could recall was during recent flooding in the area.

It was agreed that this question would also be asked of officers.

Reference had been made to the provision of a shuttle bus and Councillor Jo Stewart queried where this would operate from. Councillor Boeck advised that it would transport passengers from Midgham Train Station to Shalford Farm, a distance of approximately 2.5 miles.

In the absence of any site visit, Councillor Law explained that the roads approaching Shalford Farm were very minor and narrow in places.

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Questions to Officers

Councillor Woodhams repeated his question to the Ward Member on traffic impact. Mr Dowding gave the view that roads in the area could in theory cope with the increased traffic, but the issue was that traffic levels were expected to increase by four times existing levels (approximately 480 movements per day into the site). It was also the case that motor vehicles would have to be used to access the site on unlit, rural roads that had no footways or cycle ways. The only alternative to the motor vehicle was the shuttle bus.

Mr Dowding continued by explaining that the traffic data provided by the applicant was only concerned with the impact during peak hours, but it was the expectation that the site would be more commonly accessed at off-peak times. The impact on the daily traffic flow was unclear. The consideration for Members was whether the addition to the daily traffic flow was acceptable on country lanes to an unsustainable site.

Councillor Alan Macro referred to paragraph 6.18 of the report which highlighted difficulties with achieving a BREEAM excellent rating. He questioned why this was not a reason for refusal.

Mr Butler explained that the achievement of BREEAM excellence was restrained by the site's unsustainable location and it would not be possible to get anything beyond a 'Good' rating. The applicant was looking to gain a 'Pass' rating. Therefore, if planning permission was granted it would be contrary to policy on technical grounds. However, Officers did not feel it was a sustainable reason for refusal. Mr Dray added that Members could consider this as a justifiable reason for refusal.

In considering the plans, Councillor Macro noted that a large proportion of the garden of Cottage 33 would be lost as it was proposed to be used as a car park. He was concerned at this, as well as the close location of cars to the dwelling and he queried the impact on the amenity.

Mr Butler acknowledged that the garden space of Cottage 33 would be reduced, but not to such a degree as to warrant refusal of the application. The cottage fell outside of the red line boundary, but it was still in the ownership of the Estate. In terms of noise nuisance from the car park, Mr Butler advised that no objections had been raised on this by Environmental Health Officers.

Councillor Macro also queried if the boiler house was to be located in a green field rather than the farmyard. He would be concerned if this was the case.

Mr Butler confirmed that the boiler house was proposed for a green field, which fell outside of the curtilage of the farm site. Policy CS5 stated that infrastructure for new developments was acceptable in principle. The boiler house was a small building that would be well screened and the biomass boiler would help to sustain the development. Officers considered this to be an on-balance point, but did not feel it was a reason to refuse the application.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon queried whether the site was only considered to be unsustainable because access could only be achieved by car. Mr Butler confirmed that it was considered unsustainable for this reason as there was no public transport to the site, Midgham Train Station was approximately 2.5 miles away. In addition, there were no cycle ways or pedestrian access.

Councillor Mackinnon then referred to the application's submission which questioned the need for a sequential test for this site. He asked Officers' for their views on that.

Mr Butler advised that this was a difficult question to answer. A sequential test was not required for a small scale development, but this was not defined. However, the Development Management Procedure Order and the National Planning Policy

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Framework (NPPF) did state that a major application was over 1,000 square metres. This application was in excess of 1,000 square metres (1,337 square metres). If it had been smaller in scale then a sequential test might not have applied.

Councillor Mackinnon followed this by referring to the applicant's view that the need for a sequential test ignored the synergies with the Estate, the scheme could not be relocated to a town centre. Mr Butler agreed there would be synergies with the Estate if the application was approved. The applicant had volunteered a personal permission, but that was only permitted in exceptional circumstances and such circumstances had not been made clear.

Mr Dowding agreed with the comments made that the site was not in a sustainable location, with motor vehicles the only realistic access to the site.

Mr Dray added that accessibility was the issue. A fundamental aim of the planning system was to move to a more sustainable pattern of development that had a reduced reliance on motor vehicles. The concern was that this application did not support that wider objective. It had been acknowledged that local roads could cope but there was no viable alternative to motor vehicles, with no cycle paths etc.

Mr Dray then commented on sequential test requirements. The NPPF did state that the sequential approach should not be applied to applications for small scale rural offices or other rural small scale rural development. Although the NPPF did not define 'small scale' Officers considered that the size of this application in a remote location meant that it was not small scale in context. The fact that it was a major application formed part of that consideration, but this was also part of a wider planning judgment. This was therefore a consideration for Members.

Councillor Law commented, in response to a question from Councillor Tony Linden, that as Chairman, he would be notified if approval or refusal of an application would result in an application being referenced to the District Planning Committee. He had received no such notification for this application.

Councillor Linden made reference to the relatively recently erected Rosebourne Garden Centre in Aldermaston. He questioned whether that had been considered a sustainable development/site to help in determining this planning application.

In response, Mr Butler stated the need to consider the merits of the application before Members. Mr Dowding added that footway links were in existence to Rosebourne and there was a recognised cycle link to it from Aldermaston Train Station. Rosebourne was also situated within a village and residents lived in close proximity to the garden centre. It was a much more sustainable location than Shalford Farm.

Councillor Law referred to the small access to the site to the north of the main access which was to be used by emergency vehicles. He queried if this access could be used by delivery vehicles to the site and queried the visibility splays at this access point.

Mr Dowding was not able to comment on this access. The consideration by Highways had been on the main access point. However, Mr Butler explained that this was something he had raised with the applicant. The small access would be for service and emergency vehicles only. If the application was approved, Mr Butler recommended that a condition of approval should be included to restrict this smaller access point and not allow it to become a general access. This was particularly important as the visibility splay to the north was not good.

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Debate

Councillor Macro referred to the mention made by supporters to the poor condition of the site and that this application would be a great improvement. However, Councillor Macro raised a concern that the applicant be rewarded for allowing the site to deteriorate.

Councillor Macro then commented that he used the roads in question regularly, in particular when journeying to and from site visits. As already pointed out, these were narrow country lanes, with narrow bridges and visibility issues in some cases. He would be concerned at an increase in traffic on these roads, especially when this increase would include larger/delivery vehicles and not solely cars. He had experienced congestion on some occasions on these roads. Councillor Macro agreed with the concerns raised by the Highways Officer.

Councillor Mackinnon noted and understood the reasons proposed for refusal of the application. However, he queried to what extent planning policy took note of the rural nature of the district and, in particular, this part of the district. For example, it would be very difficult to introduce cycle lanes in this area. Cars would therefore be needed to access the site. Councillor Mackinnon felt this was a good development that would benefit the economy and safeguard/create jobs. He would not want to limit the potential to enhance the rural economy.

Councillor Mackinnon noted points about a sequential test being needed for developments in excess of 1,000 square metres. However, this application was not greatly in excess of that. There were also wider considerations on whether or not a sequential test applied. The applicant had stated that synergies would exist between the development site and the Estate. Councillor Mackinnon felt there was adequate justification to approve the site contrary to Officers' recommendation.

Councillor Pask took the opportunity to thank the applicant for taking note of the points raised by the Committee when the previous application was considered and making changes to the scheme as a result. Overdevelopment had been a concern for Members and the applicant had reduced the floor size. He also praised the intention to bring the site back into use and supported the principle. However, accessibility to the location remained a concern. The reliance on cars had already been noted and those accessing the site would highly likely use their cars to do so on what were narrow/single track country lanes. Councillor Pask was not convinced that a shuttle bus would be well used.

While local people had knowledge of the local roads and the limited visibility in some areas, this would not be known by non-locals travelling to the site. The proposal was smaller in scale, but Councillor Pask felt it would still generate sufficient additional traffic to create a problem on the local road network.

Councillor Cottam advised that he had sympathy for local businesses, but made the point that West Berkshire Council had declared a climate emergency, this involved making difficult decisions. The Council was policy led and its policies should therefore be followed.

Councillor Law made the point that a large part of the proposal was the provision of bedrooms to support the nearby, existing wedding venue. The local roads did therefore already carry traffic related to the wedding venue and the distance to Shalford Farm would be less than traffic to other accommodation.

Councillor Cottam restated that West Berkshire Council was a policy led local authority and the Council had declared a climate emergency. The Officer advice had been that the site was in an unsustainable location. He therefore proposed acceptance of Officers' recommendation to refuse planning permission.

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Councillor Macro seconded the proposal and requested that the inability to achieve BREEAM excellence be included as an additional reason for refusal. This reinforced the point about the site being in an unsustainable location.

Councillor Cottam, as proposer, agreed to this additional reason for refusal.

RESOLVED that the Head of Development and Planning be authorised to refuse planning permission for the following reasons:

1. The proposal will significantly increase traffic in a remote rural location that has no pedestrian or bus routes and is accessible only by rural roads which are not conducive to cycling. Accordingly, by virtue of the nature, intensity and location of the development it would significantly increase traffic where the mode of travel can only reasonably be the private car. The proposal is therefore unsustainable and is contrary to Policies ADPP1, ADPP6, CS9, CS10 and CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026, the Local Transport Plan for West Berkshire 2011-2026, and the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The application has failed to satisfy the sequential test for main town centre uses in Chapter 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The proposed major development is not considered to be excluded from the sequential test by paragraph 88 of the NPPF, as it is not considered "small scale". This is primarily because it comprises an intense mix of uses in the context of the rural location. The proposed development would accordingly contribute towards undermining the viability and vitality of local district centres, which would be preferable locations for the scale and type of proposed uses, contrary to Policy CS11 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.
3. The application has failed to demonstrate that the proposed development will achieve an "Excellent" rating under the BREEAM assessment, contrary to Policy CS15 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026. The failure to achieve BREEAM, in part due to the limitations of the location of the site, reinforces the inherently unsustainable nature of the location. The application is therefore contrary to paragraph 150(b) of the National Planning Policy Framework, in terms of the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in development, such as through its location and design, in the context of taking a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 8.30pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

Agenda Item 4.(1)

| Item No. | Application No. and Parish | Statutory Target Date | Proposal, Location, Applicant |
|----------|--|--------------------------|--|
| (1) | 20/00674/FUL Stratfield Mortimer | 11 May 2020 ¹ | Change of use of land and the construction of a 150 space car park with alterations to the highway, landscaping, and associated works. Land to the South east of Mortimer Station, Station Road, Mortimer. Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council. |

¹ Extension of time agreed with applicant until 7 August 2020.

The application can be viewed on the Council's website at the following link:
<http://planning.westberks.gov.uk/rpp/index.asp?caseref=20/00674/FUL>

Recommendation Summary: The Head of Development and Planning be authorised to refuse planning permission.

Ward Members: Councillor Graham Bridgman
Councillor Royce Longton
Councillor Geoffrey Mayes

Reason for Committee Determination: Ward Member call in by Councillor Bridgman if recommended for refusal as a major application by the parish council, with project identified in the Neighbourhood Development Plan which would need a debate if proposed to be refused.

Committee Site Visit: Owing to social distancing restrictions, the option of a committee site visit is not available. Instead, a collection of photographs is available to view at the above link.

Contact Officer Details

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Job Title: Senior Planning Officer
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This application seeks planning permission for change of use of land and construction of a 150 space car park with alterations to the highway, landscaping and associated works.
- 1.2 The site is to the north west corner of a large agricultural field which is bounded by trees and hedging. There is an agricultural access onto the site off Station Road to the north, opposite a row of semi-detached dwellings. The railway line is beyond the western boundary of the site. The Mortimer station buildings are Grade II* listed. The site is outside of a defined settlement boundary, and the nearest settlement of Stratfield Mortimer is to the west.
- 1.3 The submitted application includes:
 - arboricultural method statement,
 - extended phase 1 ecological survey,
 - statement of community involvement,
 - transport statement,
 - landscape visual impact assessment,
 - heritage statement,
 - highways technical note,
 - letters in response to comments from Network Rail and the Local Lead Flood Authority,
 - and drawings showing the proposed layout, sections and layout of the ramp and steps to the station platform, tree protection plan and surface water drainage strategy.
- 1.4 The proposed layout is for a new proposed vehicle access further east along Station Road opposite dwelling No. 5. The internal access road would go west and open out into the car park running north south along the western boundary. The car park would have an elongated oval circulation route with 2 central parking rows and a row either side of the internal road. A drop off area is proposed to the north of the site.
- 1.5 Around the car park would be landscaping and a larger area to the west of the site where it would be on the boundary with the remainder of the agricultural field. However, most of the planting shown on this side is outside of the red line and there is no blue line indicating that this land is under the control of the applicant.
- 1.6 The pedestrian route through the site is between the central car park rows and towards the north of the site. This would join proposed ramp access to the station platform. A pedestrian access onto Station Road is proposed to the west of the existing agricultural access along Station Road and over the bridge. The existing agricultural access would be stopped up and planted with hedging.
- 1.7 Part of the proposed drainage is for an elongated oval narrow attenuation basin between Station Road and the internal road roughly behind the existing agricultural access. A larger triangular attenuation pond is proposed to the other side of the internal road to the north east boundary of the site. Banking is shown on the boundary with Station Road to the north west of the site.
- 1.8 Trees to the boundary with the railway line and along Station Road are proposed to be retained. Works to provide the steps/ramp to the platform and the footway over the bridge will be within the root protection areas of some trees.

2. Planning History

2.1 The table below outlines the relevant planning history of the application site.

| Application | Proposal | Decision / Date |
|--------------|---|--|
| 08/01464/FUL | Provision of car park for 100 cars to serve Mortimer Station. | Refused September 2008. Dismissed at appeal March 2009. |

2.2 The appeal decision (included within the agenda) of 2009 was made under the West Berkshire District Local Plan Saved Policies 2007, and the South East Plan. The South East Plan has since been revoked (except for one policy) which is not relevant to this application) and more policies of the Local Plan Saved Policies 2007 have now been replaced. The West Berkshire Core Strategy was adopted in 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework came into force the same year. The Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan was made in 2017. The appeal proposal was for the car park to be laid out east/west towards the north boundary of the site.

2.3 The appeal decision noted the restricted visibility caused by the bridge on Station Road and the hazard it presents where the road is relatively narrow to those using it with pushchairs or wheelchairs (paragraphs 12 and 13). It also considered that proposal to be “an intrusive, large scale urbanising element in the countryside, and would be particularly obtrusive in the setting of the village on the approach from the south east” (paragraph 17). It also considered the level of car parking proposed to not be justified or contribute positively to the promotion of sustainable travel choices (paragraphs 24 and 26).

3. Procedural Matters

3.1 EIA: The nature and scale of this development is considered to fall within the description of 10(b) urban development listed in Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. As such, EIA screening is required. The screening opinion found that the proposal is not EIA Development within the meaning of the Regulations and an Environmental Statement was not required as part of the planning application.

3.2 Publicity: A site notice was displayed on a fence post on 19 March 2020; the deadline for representations expired on 9 April 2020. A public notice was displayed in the Reading Chronicle on 26 March 2020.

3.3 CIL: Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a levy charged on most new development to pay for new infrastructure required as a result of the new development. CIL will be charged on residential (C3 and C4) and retail (A1 - A5) development at a rate per square metre (based on Gross Internal Area) on new development of more than 100 square metres of net floorspace (including extensions) or when a new dwelling is created (even if it is less than 100 square metres). Any CIL liability will be formally confirmed by the CIL Charging Authority under separate cover following the grant of any permission. More information is available at www.westberks.gov.uk/cil

4. Consultation

Statutory and non-statutory consultation

- 4.1 The table below summarises the consultation responses received during the consideration of the application. The full responses may be viewed with the application documents on the Council's website, using the link at the start of this report. Mortimer Parish Council are the applicant.

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| WBC Highways: | Objection to the proposed footway over the bridge on Station Road. |
| Archaeology: | No objection subject to condition for archaeological supervision during development. |
| Conservation: | No objection following receipt of additional information. |
| Historic England: | No comments to make. |
| Network Rail: | Initial objection. Objection withdrawn following receipt of additional information. |
| Ecology: | No objection subject to conditions to secure biodiversity mitigation measures and enhancements. |
| Tree Officer: | Clarification required on trees by the footway over the bridge on Station Road. Otherwise no objection subject to conditions on landscaping, arboricultural and tree protection matters |
| Landscape Consultant: | Objection. Impact of a large area for parking 150 cars, new access with signage and lighting introduces development into open countryside which will not be possible to successfully mitigate. |
| Transport Policy: | No comments received. |
| Local Lead Flood Authority: | Objection. Insufficient information to confirm suitability of proposed drainage strategy. |

Public representations

- 4.2 Representations have been received from 5 contributors, all of whom object to the proposal. A letter of support was included in the application submission from Great Western Railway.
- 4.3 The full responses may be viewed with the application documents on the Council's website, using the link at the start of this report. In summary, the following issues/points have been raised:
- 50% increase in parking proposed on site compared to previously refused application;
 - Lack of justification for level of car parking proposed and in light of COVID-19 epidemic the long term impacts on commuting to work;

- Proposal does not address previous issue of impact on rural landscape, on productive agricultural land and would be highly visible;
- Green Park station and associated parking for Grazeley to be completed soon;
- Potential alternative car parking sites were identified by the Parish Council in 2013 including the field adjacent to the existing station car park and issues of deliverability of this site;
- Disabled access whilst beneficial is not a legal requirement;
- Issues of safety of vulnerable people using proposed footway including the gradient of the footway;
- Issues with impact on businesses using existing station access and their level of traffic movements onto Station Road both on accessibility from conflict with proposed footway and in queuing at proposed traffic lights;
- Issues with large vehicles needing to cross the bridge and conflict with pedestrians;
- Submitted landscape and visual impact assessment acknowledges high impacts on local residents;
- Issues of pollution including cutting carbon emissions and drainage;
- Issues of construction/delivery vehicles;
- Issues of additional traffic from provision of additional car parking.

5. Planning Policy

5.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The following policies of the statutory development plan are relevant to the consideration of this application.

- Policies ADPP1, ADPP6, CS5, CS8, CS13, CS14, CS16, CS17, CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 (WBCS).
- Policies OVS.5, OVS.6, TRANS.1, and Appendix 5 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).
- Policies GD1, GD2, GD3, GD4, GD6, IS3, B2, B3 of the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan (2017).

5.2 The following material considerations are relevant to the consideration of this application:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- Local Transport Plan for West Berkshire (2011-2026)
- Manual for Streets
- WBC Quality Design SPD (2006)
- WBC Sustainable Drainage SPD (2019)
- WBC Cycle and Motorcycle Advice and Standards for New Development
- West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (2019)

6. Appraisal

6.1 The main issues for consideration in this application are:

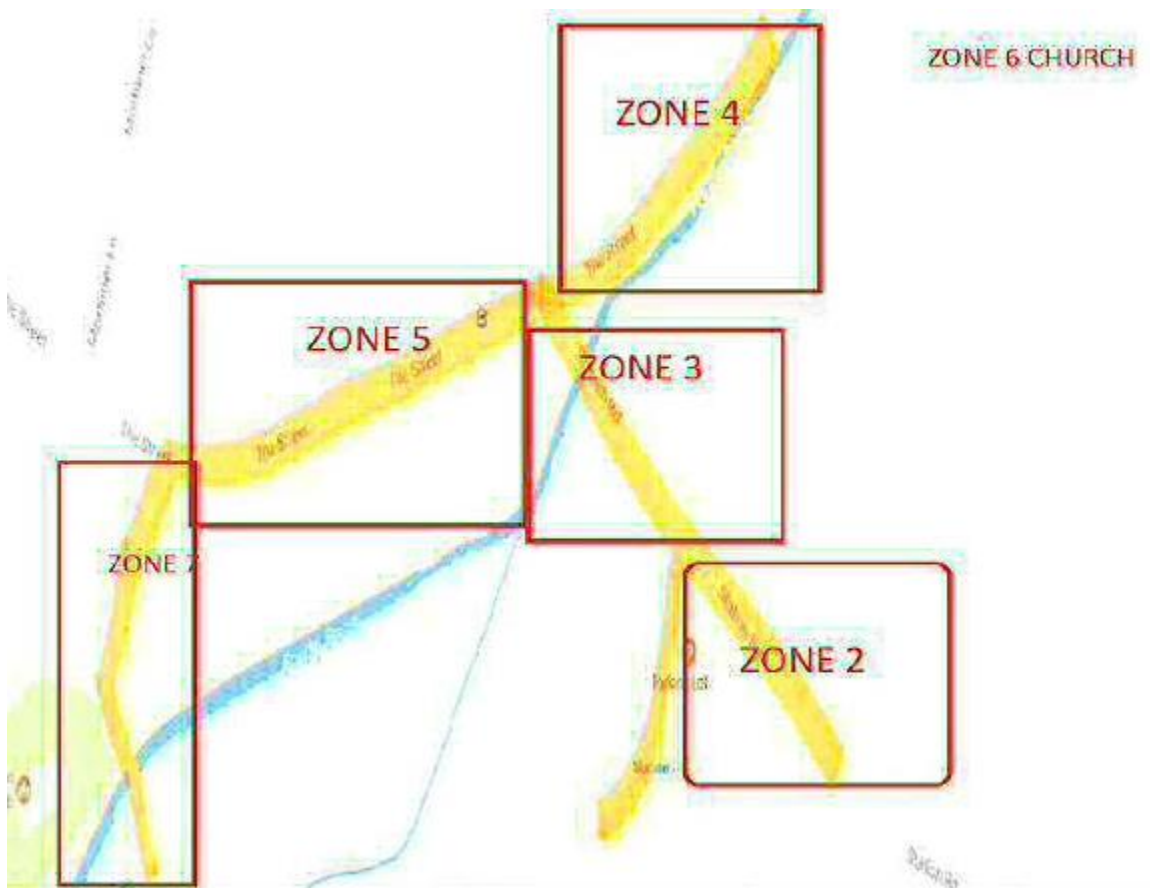
- Principle of development
- Character and appearance
- Quality of life

- Biodiversity
- Tree protection
- Flooding and drainage
- Highways

Principle of development

- 6.2 According to Policy ADPP1, development in West Berkshire will follow the existing settlement pattern, and only appropriate limited development in the countryside will be allowed, focused on addressing identified needs and maintaining a strong rural economy. Policy ADPP6 states that development in the countryside will be strictly controlled. The Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan establishes the principle of additional car parking to serve Mortimer Rail Station under policy IS3. This policy states that an extension to the station car parking will be promoted and encouraged. It does not identify a particular site or allocate land for the extension to the car parking. Nor does it state the level of additional car parking identified as being required.
- 6.3 The Local Transport Plan for West Berkshire 2011-2026 is a material planning consideration. Pedestrian and cycle links to Mortimer Station are highlighted as locally important improvements in the East Kennet Valley area (paragraph 6.6.3). Opportunities to improve accessibility from Mortimer to employment and essential services in nearby towns will be sought (paragraph 6.6.11). The Council will work in partnership with Network Rail, the train operating company and Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council to enhance security, cycle parking, and passenger information and waiting facilities at Mortimer rail station. Further improvements will also be sought to allow better access to the station, including making the station's platforms fully accessible to all rail passengers (paragraph 6.6.13).
- 6.4 The submitted Statement of Community Involvement sets out a survey conducted in June and July 2018 to evidence the need for the 150 space car park to serve Mortimer station. It found that:
- 85 respondents use Mortimer station daily, 67 a few times a week, 59 weekly, 103 monthly, 100 less than this, and 47 never (paragraph 4.15 quotes these as percentages but the total would be greater than 100% so it's assumed the numbers are total respondents rather than percentages);
 - 119 respondents did not travel by train due to the lack of car parking at Mortimer station (paragraph 4.12);
 - 203 respondents travel by car as a single occupant to a station (paragraph 4.21). It's not known if these are to Mortimer or another station (the question doesn't specify the station although it's within the section on Mortimer). Paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6 of the statement of community involvement note that all respondents who travel to work were invited to participate including those who do not use Mortimer station;
 - 377 respondents would travel by train more frequently if it was easier to park at the station (paragraph 4.24), and 444 respondents agreed more car parking should be provided at Mortimer station (although the number of additional spaces or where they might be located was not included in the question) (paragraph 4.25).
- 6.5 The Statement of Community Involvement estimates that the survey was sent to around a third of residents within the catchment of Mortimer Station (paragraph 4.36) which it states are postcodes RG7 1, RG7 2 and RG7 3.

- 6.6 Of the 85 respondents who use Mortimer Station daily it is not known how many drive to it or if they are the sole occupant of vehicles. Similarly it is not known how regularly respondents who do not currently use the station due to lack of parking would use the station if the parking were to be increased.
- 6.7 Whilst the submitted Statement of Community Involvement demonstrates that there is demand for more parking at Mortimer Station it is difficult to assess from it the actual additional spaces required. According to the GWR website Mortimer has 53 car parking spaces, two of which are for disability vehicles).
- 6.8 The submitted Transport Assessment appendices include a count of occupied parking spaces at the existing station car park undertaken on Tuesday 4 July 2017 between 7am and 7pm. The highest occupancy was 49 spaces at 4.30pm, an occupancy of 92% including the disability vehicle spaces. At no point during survey was the car park at capacity, but it was at more than 80% at capacity for 8 of the 12 hours.
- 6.9 The Transport Assessment also included a parking beat survey on The Street and Station Road. No vehicles were observed in zones 2, 3 and 6 at any time and zone 7 was only associated with school and church parking.



- 6.10 Vehicles stated as “station related” in zone 4 were 10 vehicles at 4.30pm. In zone 5 12 vehicles were quoted as “station related” at 4.30pm. Also in zone 5, 3 parked cars were stated as “went to station” in each half hour between 8.30am and 1pm. “Departure from station” was stated for 14 parked cars in zone 5 at 10.30am, 13 at 3pm, 11 at 4pm, 9 at 6.30pm and 8 at 7pm. Paragraph 2.16 of the Transport Assessment states that these documents in appendix 2 demonstrate a clear demand for additional parking to be provided at the station.
- 6.11 What is evident is that there is parking associated with the station in zones 4 and 5. However, the 3 cars parked in zone 5 between 8.30 until 1pm would have been able to

park at the station at 8.30am when 9 spaces were available. The cars observed in zone 5 at 6.30pm and 7pm would have been able to park at the station at that time (although they may have been parked all day as part of the 14 vehicles observed from 10.30am. At 10.30am there wouldn't have been capacity for all of them). The remainder of cars parked on roads between 10.30am to 4.30pm wouldn't all have been able to park at the station from the time they were observed. This seems to amount to 14 vehicles, although there was some capacity at the station car park between 10.30am to 4.30pm.

- 6.12 There is evidence therefore that a proportion of users of the station who park on the roads in the surrounding area out of choice. On street parking is assumed to be free of charge. Parking charges at Mortimer Station taken from the Great Western Railway website are quoted as £3.40 per day, £17 per week, £62 per month, £185 for 3 months and £620 per annum. So cost may a factor for those choosing not to use the station car park. It is not known what the proposed car park charges would be, and it would not meet the tests of the National Planning Policy Framework to apply a condition relating to parking fees.
- 6.13 The suitability of the zones for on street parking isn't provided. Nevertheless the levels of on street parking observed associated with the station are not considered evidence to justify a local need for an additional 150 space car park. The Highway Authority remains concerned that provision of such a car park would draw in additional traffic from further afield to utilise the car park.
- 6.14 The proposed car park of 150 spaces and the existing provision would take the total to nearly 200 spaces. This would be a similar level of car parking to that being provided for Network Rail as part of the redevelopment at Market Street, Newbury, which is an urban area and a transport hub. Green Park Station will have a 200 space multi-storey car park to improve accessibility and connectivity to Green Park Business Park which is a large employment area and in proximity to Madejski Stadium in Reading and also designed as a transport hub. Theale station has 215 parking spaces which is a rural service centre with nearby protected employment areas.
- 6.15 As Mortimer Station is in a rural area outside of a settlement boundary it is difficult to concur that 200 parking spaces meet an identified local need. The Statement of Community Involvement states that a third of the catchment residents were targeted for the survey. It states the catchment as being postcodes RG7 1, RG7 2, and RG7 3. Postcode RG7 1AA is out of district in Wokingham and will be nearly a kilometre closer to the station being developed at Green Park than Mortimer. Burghfield is a smaller village under the settlement hierarchy of policy ADPP1 and will also be closer to Green Park or Theale than Mortimer. Burghfield Common is a rural service centre and roughly equi-distant to Theale and Mortimer station.
- 6.16 It would seem therefore that geographically Mortimer Station would primarily serve Mortimer, a rural service centre under policy ADPP1, to a certain extent Burghfield Common, and the local environs thereabout. Policy ADPP6 notes that this area of the District has more limited services and poorer transport connections such that lower growth and development is proposed for this area. The protected employment areas in this part of the district are closer to Aldermaston and Theale which have their own stations.
- 6.17 Where the land is not within the ownership of the train station operator and justification for the car park would be based on an identified need for additional parking specifically for the station it is important the use of the car park for this purpose is secured. As such were a car park in this location to be considered acceptable a planning obligation would be sought to tie the car park to be available for users of Mortimer Station.

6.18 Whilst the principle of additional car parking at Mortimer station is provided by policy IS3 it does not specify the amount or allocate land. The supporting documents submitted with the application indicate additional demand but do not translate into a daily quantifiable demand. The nature of Mortimer as rural service centre without the employment base of other rural service centres in this part of the District do not evidence the local need for a station car park totalling 200 spaces, comparable with the provision at known urban areas and transport hubs. As such the proposal is considered contrary to policies ADPP1 and ADPP6.

Character and appearance

6.19 Core Strategy Policies ADPP1, CS14 and CS19 (which includes heritage assets) apply, as well as the Quality Design SPD. The Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Plan also outlines a number of strategies that relate to character and appearance which have informed the policies and policy GD6 relates specifically to landscape. The strategy states that the site selection and design for additional station car parking will conform to all relevant policies in the plan.

6.20 The site is in proximity to areas of archaeological interest, The Council's Archaeologist has been consulted on the application. They advise that archaeological reports received since 2008 indicate the presence of later prehistoric or Roman cropmark features about 100m to the north. Whilst the 19th century railway line and bridge will have created some disturbance they nevertheless request a condition for an archaeological watching brief so any remains on site can be properly recorded.

6.21 Due to the proximity of the site to the Grade II* listed Mortimer Station a heritage impact assessment was requested. Paragraph 193 of the NPPF says that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets, and policy CS19 requires the conservation and where appropriate the enhancement of heritage assets and their settings. Historic England were consulted on the application but had no comments to make.

6.22 The Council's Conservation Officer considers the impact of the development on the setting of the listed buildings to be acceptable. They note there will be an impact from the partial removal of some of the tree and hedge cover that separates the site from the listed buildings by reducing the existing verdant back-cloth and partly altering the setting of the station. However, as it is relatively small scale and there will be additional planting they raise no objection.

6.23 The submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, planning statement, plans and arboricultural impact assessment have been reviewed by a landscape consultant. They note that under the West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) the site is located in the Grazeley Open Clay Lowland which is described as:

traditional lowland mixed farming landscape divided into large scale fields bounded by hedgerows;

sparsely settled rural area with small villages, hamlets and scattered farmsteads with high levels of relative tranquillity;

varied visual character, with expansive views from some vantage points across large fields enabled by low hedgerows;

rural landscape provides an undeveloped backdrop and setting to existing settlements.

6.24 With regard to existing detractors the LCA notes the pressure for development due to the proximity to Reading and that development out of character with the local context

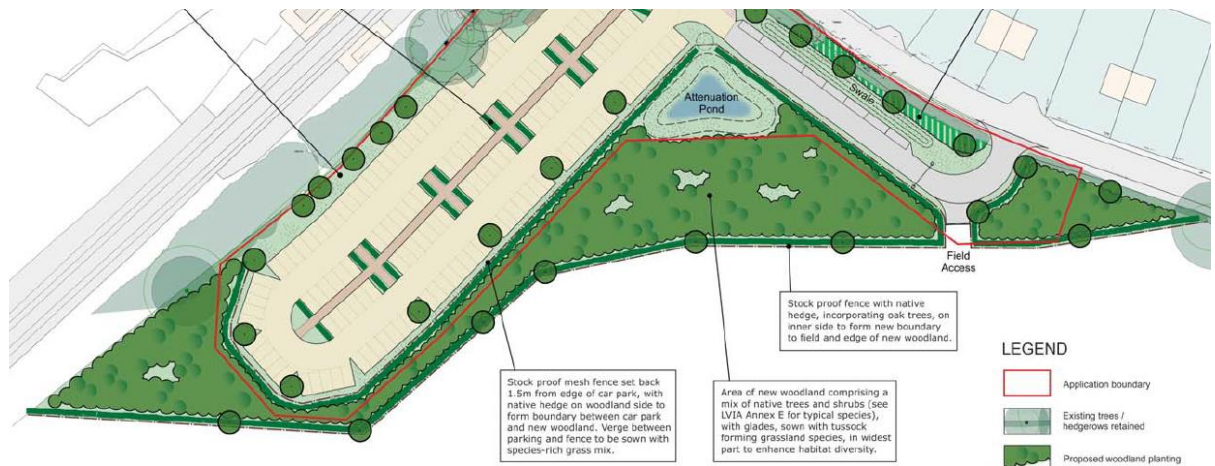
would detract from the rural quality, tranquillity and dark night skies. The applicant's landscape consultant notes that the LCA also notes that,

“noise and movement emanating from busy transport routes including the nearby M4, A33 and the railway line are locally intrusive in places and have a negative impact on the rural and tranquil qualities of the mostly undeveloped landscape”.

- 6.25 The applicant's landscape consultant therefore considers that where the railway is already a detracting feature that a station car park adjacent to a railway station, railway line and railway bridge could not be out of character with it. However, the LCA only refers to the railway line, it does not specifically mention the station at Mortimer or its car park.
- 6.26 With regard to views the Council's landscape consultant considers that the site is only visible from Station Road and from upstairs windows of the dwellings on Station Road and Keepers Cottage in the summer. There is little inter-visibility between the station and the site due to the trees and shrubs between them and where the station is at a lower level within a slight cutting. They note the site is set within an open rural landscape outside of the settlement of Stratfield Mortimer. They consider the key landscape issues to be the impact on the setting, gateway and approach into Stratfield Mortimer village and the impact on the landscape character of the area.
- 6.27 The applicant's landscape consultant notes that the dwellings along Station Road have no right to a view. They also consider that there will be greater inter-visibility between the site and the railway in the winter months and that the Council's landscape consultant has failed to consider this. However, the Council's landscape consultant notes that the railway is within a cutting. From the submitted plan on the details for the proposed steps and ramps from the proposed car park to the platform there is a drop in ground level between 1 and 1.8 metres.
- 6.28 The Council's landscape consultant assesses that the proposal would be low-rise development of urban character in a rural area and that there will be a significant adverse effect on the landscape character of the site. The impact of a large-scale urbanising development is not considered possible to successfully mitigate; that there will also be views of the car park replacing a local rural view which contributes to the sense of leaving the village of Stratfield Mortimer into a more rural landscape.
- 6.29 The Council's landscape consultant considers the site to be within a rural approach and for this approach to be adversely affected by the proposal. They consider the village to be a linear patterned settlement developed along The Street and its character includes intermittent rows of dwellings interspersed with fields with no defined edge to the settlement. Under 3.1 of the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan it states that *“all roads coming into Stratfield Mortimer pass through either open farmland or woodland, thus all approaches to the parish are rural”*. The objective of the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan to avoid creeping urbanisation and maintain rural approaches to the parish is therefore considered not to have been met.
- 6.30 The applicant's landscape consultant conversely considers that the site is on the edge of the village and therefore closely linked to it and that the existing railway station is already a significant feature in the landscape.
- 6.31 Overall the Council's landscape consultant assesses the site as part of an arable field forming part of a wider rural landscape contributing to the setting of Stratfield Mortimer and rural approach to it along Station Road. The proposed landscaping is not considered by them to contribute to mitigating the view of parked cars from the more sensitive locations of the southern side of Station Road bridge and the row of dwellings on the opposite side of Station Road. The band of tree planting to the southern side of the car park would provide a long term landscape feature of value but is not considered by them to compensate for the size, scale and urban character of the car park. Planting adjacent

to Station Road on the southern side of the bridge they are also concerned would be to the top of a slope that will be dry and not grow well, whilst planting at a lower level under the existing tree would not provide long term screening.

- 6.32 The applicant's landscape consultant reiterates that the proposal includes 0.4ha of woodland and other planting including 0.5km of native hedge planting and that in their opinion it would significantly (if not fully) mitigate the adverse landscape effects. However, it's not clear if this only refers to the planting shown within the red line. Any shown outside of the red line cannot be taken into account as it cannot be conditioned to be provided. Extract of landscape strategy plan below:



- 6.33 The applicant's landscape consultant considers the resultant views of the site to be less sensitive and for those passing the site the views to be of short duration. They consider the effect on the character of the approach to the village to be very limited, and the changes to the landscape pattern to be localised. There is also disagreement on planting to the slope towards the bridge on Station Road that it would provide screening and would not be limited in growth.
- 6.34 The Council's landscape consultant concludes that the proposal is contrary to policy CS14 for being unsympathetic to the surrounding rural landscape and its setting, contrary to policy CS19 for not respecting the existing form of settlement in the landscape and eroding the rural landscape of an undeveloped backdrop on the approach to the village. It is also contrary to the strategy of the neighbourhood plan which seeks to maintain a compact village and avoid urbanising creep, and maintain rural approaches to the parish.
- 6.35 The existing railway station is set at a lower ground level than the site such that it is not particularly visible from the site or further away along Station Road. The station is not specifically mentioned as a detracting feature in the landscape in the LCA. The settlement pattern of Stratfield Mortimer is predominantly along The Street such that the row of houses along Station Road near the site are not considered within or immediately adjacent to the edge of the village. The site is therefore considered to be part of a rural approach to the village. Much of the proposed planting shown to the south around the proposed car park is actually outside the red line of the application and there is no blue line on the location plan. As such it would not be possible to secure by condition any landscaping within these areas which are proposed as part of the landscape mitigation for the development. Overall therefore it is considered that the Council's landscape consultant's conclusion is correct that the proposal is contrary to policies CS14, CS19 and the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Quality of Life

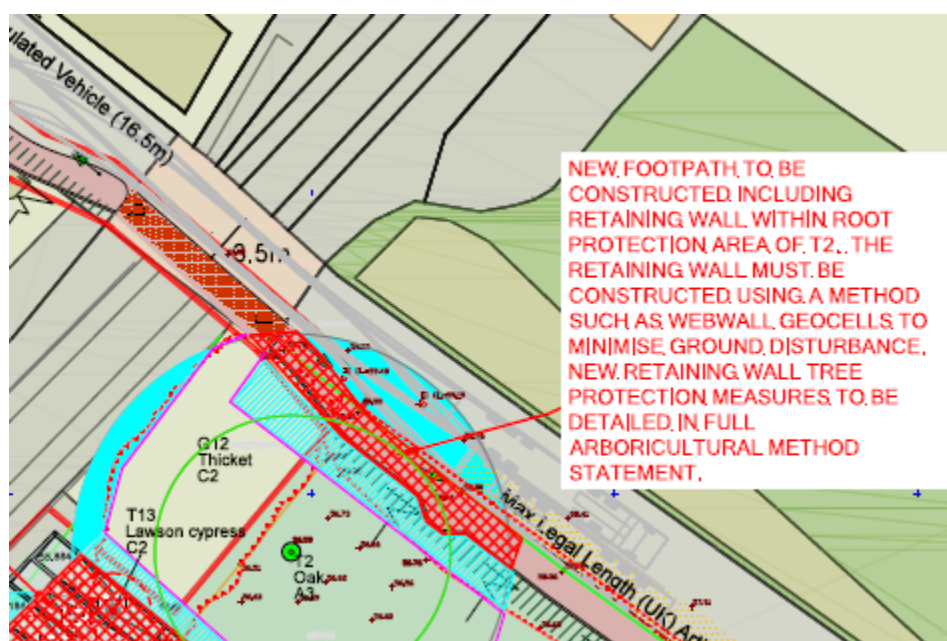
- 6.36 Policies CS14 of the Core Strategy and the Policies OVS.5 and OVS.6 of the Saved Local Plan (relating to noise and environmental pollution respectively) and the Quality Design SPD are applicable. Policy GD4 of the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan outlines that street lighting should only be provided for security with low level lighting for pedestrians. There are properties to the other side of Station Road which would be affected by the development. Environmental Health and Transport Policy have not provided comments on the application.
- 6.37 With regard to potential noise impacts policy OVS.6 states that measures to minimising adverse impacts of noise generation include location, design, layout and operation of development and have regard to matters including existing sources of noise, and the need for appropriate sound insulation measures.
- 6.38 Details of lighting have not been submitted as part of the proposal and so a full assessment cannot be made. There is a street light either side of the bridge on Station Road, but otherwise there is none along Station Road in-front of the row of houses. The proposed footway link onto Station Road comes out opposite No. 1 on Station Road in proximity to the existing street light. The proposed traffic lights would not be directed towards the front elevation of the dwelling and No. 1 is set back from the road by approximately 13m.
- 6.39 The vehicle access point would be opposite No. 5 on Station Road. That dwelling is set 10 metres back from the road. There will be both car head lights from vehicles exiting the car park and noise from vehicles accessing and leaving the car park. The main car park is set away from the properties where it runs at right angles to Station Road. The internal road would run parallel to Station Road and would be set 10 metres from the road. Planting is proposed between the internal road and Station Road which will provide some screening both visual and acoustic. Within the car park itself therefore the noise impact is not considered to be materially harmful.

Biodiversity

- 6.40 Policy CS17 requires biodiversity to be conserved and enhanced and the B2 and B3 policies on biodiversity in the Stratfield Mortimer Development Plan also apply. An extended phase 1 ecological assessment has been submitted and reviewed by the Council's Ecologist.
- 6.41 The submitted survey identifies the loss of a small area of native hedgerow which can be compensated for and increased overall as part of the landscaping proposals. The boundaries may be used by bats foraging and commuting but are to be retained. Lighting is to be minimised in these areas and specification on the type of lighting that would have least impact on bats is identified in the assessment. The small area of hedgerow clearance should be avoided during bird nesting season. Measures for vegetation clearance as part of the development are outlined as a precautionary to avoid impact on reptiles within the field margins. Biodiversity enhancements identified in the assessment are additional bird and bat boxes and native species tree and shrub planting.
- 6.42 The Council's Ecologist agrees with most of the identified impacts and mitigation. There is a request for the bird and bat boxes to be adhered to the back of the existing building for more secure fixings this is not considered appropriate for the listed building. Details of fixings could be secured as part of a condition. Conditions are otherwise identified by the Council's Ecologist for construction environmental management plan and a landscape environmental management plan, and a lighting plan. It is considered that with these conditions the development would be in accordance with policy CS17.

Tree Protection

- 6.43 Policy CS19 requires landscape character to be conserved and enhanced with the natural, cultural and functional components of its character considered as a whole. Part of the landscape is the green infrastructure of trees and hedges which are a potential constraint on site for the proposed development. The submission includes tree protection details of trees to be retained and an arboricultural method statement. The Council's Tree Officer has been consulted on the application. It is noted that the arboricultural impact assessment states it is preliminary with details of drainage, footpath construction, services and contractors' facilities to be prepared at a later stage.
- 6.44 They note that impacts of the development are the removal of around 40m of roadside hedge, removal of some trees and thicket, pruning of a tree, construction of new access ramps between two trees, construction of the car park and access road near four trees that will require a change in ground levels, and a type of green retaining wall construction alongside the proposed new footway that would be within the root protection area of a tree.
- 6.45 The arboricultural impact assessment notes the difference in ground levels is approximately 1.4m between the field and station platform. The footpath to link towards the bridge on Station Road will require construction of a retaining wall for structural support although details have not been prepared the change in ground level 2.2 and 2.8m high. Please see extract from plans:



- 6.46 As these are specialist matters a project arboriculturalist will be required which can be secured by condition. Post and rail fence protection to the root protection areas of five trees is requested to prevent soil compaction from vehicles and pedestrians which can also be secured by condition. A landscaping condition for landscaping planting mitigation is also required.
- 6.47 The Council's Tree Officer notes that the group of semi-mature planted trees and hedgerow to the northwest of the red line where the new footway in the extract from the plans above is proposed to connect to the existing car park were not considered. Some loss of the trees is expected here and further clarification on these impacts has been requested. The arboricultural impact assessment states that the new footpath will run through and area of trees to the west side of the road bridge and that the trees in this area have not been surveyed. As there are considered to be other issues that cannot be overcome the additional clarification has not been sought or provided on this.

- 6.48 The conditions the Tree Officer otherwise recommends are tree retention and protection, arboricultural method statement and supervision, and details of landscaping, with a condition on details to be submitted on the matters the arboricultural impact assessment notes it does not include.

Flooding and Drainage

- 6.49 The sites is located in Flood Zone 1 and just below a hectare in size. As such a flood risk assessment is not required. Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy requires all development to manage surface water in a sustainable manner through the implementation of sustainable drainage methods. The Council also has an adopted SPD on sustainable drainage. Policy GD3 in the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan also relates to flooding.
- 6.50 The Local Lead Flood Authority have been consulted on the application. They accepted the calculations provided for the proposed attenuation pond. On the drainage strategy more natural ways of removing pollutants such as swales or wetland rather than the proposed oil interceptors were requested along with further details on the detention basin to show that it maximises biodiversity/habitat/amenity benefits. An amended surface water drainage strategy plan was submitted along with calculations.
- 6.51 The latest comments on the amended drainage strategy are that the whilst the swales provide green water quality benefits the swale to the southern boundary before the scrape pond appears not to have a suitable outfall and an update is required to show the swale discharging to the pond. The scrape pond would overflow to the attenuation basin but isn't shown in the strategy and should also be utilised as an overflow for the attenuation basin at times of high water level in addition to the pond overflow to overflow to the attenuation basin which is shown.
- 6.52 Maintenance work to the ditch the final swale would discharge to is required to maintain its upkeep and ensure it remains operative for the lifetime of the development. The ditch runs across what is sown as the access to the site and should be reconsidered as it would need to divert under the road and requires an ordinary watercourse consent.
- 6.53 There has not been time available to request these amendments from the applicant prior to bring the application to committee on the date agreed with the applicant. As such there is currently insufficient information submitted to confirm that the drainage strategy complies with policy CS16 and the Sustainable Drainage SPD and can be conditioned.

Highways

- 6.54 A Transport Assessment which includes a Road Safety Audit and subsequent Technical Note have been submitted and the Council's Highways have been consulted. Policies CS13 and TRANS.1 are of relevance and the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan policy GD2 requires development to provide direct, safe and convenient pedestrian access to community facilities, minimal street furniture.
- 6.55 The Highway Authority notes that the access entrance would be 6m wide onto Station Road with visibility splays of 2.4m back and 59m to the right and 56m to the left. The pedestrian ramps from the car park to the southbound station platform would be 2m wide. The footway proposed along Station Road would be 2m wide except over the bridge where it would be a 1.8m wide painted surface. The road over the bridge would be narrowed from 5.2m to 3.5m and traffic lights installed for one-way shuttle operation that has been subject to the road safety audit, modelled, and the impact on nearby junctions considered. All matters are accepted by the Highway Authority with the exception of the need for a car park of the size proposed, the proposed footway along Station Road, and insufficient information on the impact of the footway into the station.

The need for a car park of the size proposed has been covered in the section on the principle of development.

- 6.56 The proposed footway is considered unsuitable. The gradient of the footway would be 6% or 1 in 16 to the west and in places 7% or 1 in 7 to the east. This exceeds the recommended maximum of 5% or 1 in 20 and is considered unacceptable. The originally proposed footway would be a painted surface. A kerb is now proposed as additional separation of vehicles from pedestrians to a height of 50mm. As vehicles could easily mount a kerb of this height 125mm would be sought, but is understood to not be achievable due to it causing further the footway gradient issues. The Highway Authority therefore recommend refusal on these grounds for being contrary to policy GD2 and CS13 the supporting text to which policy states that road safety is a key consideration with a particular focus given to safety of pedestrians and other vulnerable road users.
- 6.57 The Highways Authority notes the objection received that the proposed footway would reduce the carriageway width at the access into Mortimer Station such that large vehicles would be unable to turn into/out of the access. It is noted that there are business uses off the Mortimer Station access. Due to the lateness of the consultation response it has not been possible to request additional information on this from the applicant. Whilst the matter may be capable of being overcome insufficient information has currently been provided and is a reason for refusal at this stage.

7. Planning Balance and Conclusion

- 7.1 The Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan supports an extension to the car park at Mortimer Station. It does not allocate land or specify the level of car parking required. The proposal would provide a benefit to the local community. Where the site is in the open countryside only appropriate limited development will be allowed focused on addressing identified needs under policy ADPP1. Whilst a demand for additional car parking for Mortimer station has been demonstrated the submission is not considered to justify a need for an additional 150 spaces, resulting in a total capacity similar to that provided at urban transport hubs. As such the proposal is not considered appropriate limited development in the countryside and not acceptable in principle which weighs significantly against the proposal.
- 7.2 The provision of access from the southbound platform to the site and onto Station Road for those unable to cross over the railway line via the existing footbridge steps could provide a significant benefit and potentially address an identified accessibility issue for station users. However, the proposed footway along Station Road is not considered accessible due to the steep gradient over the bridge. Furthermore, the proposed 50mm kerb edge to the footway adjacent to the narrowed highway over the bridge is not considered to provide sufficient safety for pedestrians and disabled users where the kerb could easily be mounted by a vehicle. As such the benefit cannot be realised, weighing against the proposal.
- 7.3 The size and scale of the proposal is considered to result in an urbanising impact on the landscape which is a rural greenfield site and part of the rural approach to the village of Stratfield Mortimer. The proposed landscaping is not considered to mitigate this impact and the landscaping within the field around the development would be outside of the red line. This weighs significantly against the proposal.
- 7.4 There is a minor adverse impact on the amenity of the residents of Station Road. Where insufficient information has been provided to ensure the drainage strategy would meet policy requirements, and additional clarification is required on the tree impact alongside the proposed footway towards the bridge on Station Road these are considered to weigh

slightly against the proposal. If these matters had been overcome during the application and met the policy requirements these would have neutral weight in the balance.

- 7.5 Having taken account of all the relevant policy considerations and other material considerations referred to above, it is considered that the application fails to comply with the development plan. In the balance the adverse impacts of the development significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The application is recommended for refusal.

8. Full Recommendation

- 8.1 To delegate to the Head of Development and Planning to REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION for the reasons listed below.

Refusal Reasons

1. **Identified Need**

The proposed development is large in scale and size for 150 car parking spaces and on nearly a hectare of site area. It would not be appropriate limited development in the countryside and would not address an identified need for additional car parking to serve Mortimer station. As such the proposed development is contrary to policies ADPP1 and ADPP6 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026, the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. **Landscape**

The proposed development would have an urbanising impact on the landscape character and appearance of the rural area. The proposal would erode the rural landscape which provides an undeveloped back drop and setting to the rural approach to the village of Stratfield Mortimer. As such the proposal is contrary to policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026, the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan 2017, the West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. **Footway**

The proposed footway along Station Road is unsuitable for pedestrians including disabled persons using the proposed car park and train station. This is due to the proposed gradient in places and the footway design over the existing bridge. The proposal would therefore adversely affect road safety and the flow of traffic contrary to Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. **Drainage**

Insufficient information has been submitted to ensure the proposed drainage strategy can be achieved. The swale to the southern boundary does not have an outfall and is not shown to discharge to the pond. The scrape pond is not shown to overflow to the attenuation basin and should also be used as an overflow for the basin. Maintenance details are required for the existing ditch to remain operative for the development. The ditch would be required to be diverted under the proposed internal road as part of the development. As such the proposed development is contrary to policy CS16 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026, the Supplementary Planning Document: Sustainable Drainage and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. **Footway into Mortimer Station**

Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate the proposed footway off Station Road and into the access for Mortimer Station would not reduce the carriageway such that turning would not be possible for large vehicles. As such the proposed development would adversely affect road safety and the flow of traffic contrary to Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informatives

1. In attempting to determine the application in a way that can foster the delivery of sustainable development, the local planning authority has approached this decision in a positive way having regard to Development Plan policies and available guidance to try to secure high quality appropriate development. In this application there has been a need to balance conflicting considerations, and the local planning authority has also attempted to work proactively with the applicant to find a solution to the problems with the development; however, an acceptable solution to improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area could not be found.

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Appeal Decision

Hearing held on 7 July 2009
Site visit made on 7 July 2009

by Robin Jacques MSc BSc(Hons Arch)
RIBA FRSA

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State
for Communities and Local Government**

The Planning Inspectorate
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Temple Quay House
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Temple Quay
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**Decision date:
18 August 2009**

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/A/09/2098901

Land adjoining Mortimer Railway Station, Reading RG7

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council against the decision of West Berkshire District Council.
- The application Ref 08/01464/FUL, dated 2 July 2008, was refused by notice dated 30 September 2008.
- The development proposed is provision of car parking for 100 cars to serve Mortimer Station.

Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Main issues

2. I consider that the main issues in this case are: the effect of the proposal on highway conditions, with particular reference to road safety; the effect on the character and appearance of the countryside and the setting of the village, including the effect on trees, and; the effect on the aims and objectives of policies to promote travel by means other than the private car in the interests of sustainability.

Reasons

Planning policy

3. The Council's reasons for refusal include reference to policies of the Berkshire Structure Plan 1991-2006. This no longer forms part of the Development Plan, having now been superseded by The South East Plan – Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East (RSS). At the Hearing, the Council drew attention to relevant RSS Policies, particularly T4: Parking, C4: Landscape and Countryside management, CC1: Sustainable Development, and CC6: Sustainable Communities and Character of the Environment.
4. The Council's reason for refusal No 5 refers to Policy Trans 2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007 (LP). This policy has not been saved, and at the hearing saved Policy Trans 1 was referred to by the main parties. I have dealt with the appeal on the basis of the current planning policy framework, including the RSS.

The effect on highway conditions, with particular reference to road safety

5. The railway station is on the edge of the village, in a transitional setting where existing development to the south-east of the railway line is limited to a widely

spaced row of houses on Station Road. There is an attractive small Grade II* listed station building on the north-west side of the railway, with a car park for use by passengers of about 51 spaces including one disabled bay. There is a smaller waiting room on the south-east side platform, and a passenger footbridge crosses between them.

6. Under the proposal, a new car park for 100 cars would be provided on the south-east side of the railway, using the corner of a field currently in agricultural use. A pedestrian ramp would provide access from the proposed car park to the platform. The new vehicular entrance would be at the south-east end of the new car park, where there is an existing field gate.
7. The Council's highways statement indicates that visibility splays of 64 metres would be required to the north west and 59 metres to the south east of the proposed entrance, with an 'X' distance of 2.4 metres. This is based on the results of a traffic speed survey carried out in 2007 by West Berkshire Council's Traffic Management Team. This showed that although the road is subject to a 30mph speed limit, average speeds were 33.4 and 32.1 mph, and 85th percentile speeds were 39 and 37mph, for vehicles travelling north west and south east respectively. As I saw on my site visit, due to the bend in the road, visibility to the south-east is achievable with little trimming required to the roadside hedgerow. However, substantial reduction or removal of a significant length of the hedge would be needed to the north-west. I share the Council's view that the required visibility sight lines could be achieved, if the loss of the majority of the hedgerow fronting the site was otherwise acceptable.
8. The highways statement indicates that the hump-backed road bridge on Station Road is about 80 metres north-west of the proposed site entrance, which limits forward visibility from approaching vehicles until they are near the crest of the bridge. Based on the measured vehicle speeds, the highways officer considered that there would be room for 4 cars to wait on the road to turn right into the proposed car park, and still provide the required distance for a vehicle to stop, based on guidance in the Manual for Streets (MfS). On this basis, he did not object to the proposal on highway safety grounds.
9. However, in written representations and at the hearing local residents expressed concerns at the actual speeds experienced on the road, and the density of traffic flow particularly in the morning and evening rush hours. A local minibus driver, who frequently attends a house roughly opposite the proposed access, attests to a high traffic flow and back-up of 4 to 5 vehicles occurring on the mornings when he has to reverse into the private driveway. Whilst this evidence is anecdotal, I have given it some weight as relevant local experience of the current prevailing road conditions.
10. In my view, the 85th percentile speeds referred to above are at the limit of the stopping sight distance (SSD) advised in the MfS. It points out that longer SSDs may be appropriate by reference to other guidance relating to the road network, rather than the lightly used residential streets which are the focus of the MfS. I also consider that the significant gradient of the road descending from the hump-backed bridge would adversely affect stopping distance. I am satisfied, therefore, that there is a strong risk that there could be a queue of cars waiting to enter the car park in the morning peak travel period, lengthened

by a back-up of cars due to traffic flow, that would reduce the SSD to an unacceptable level. In my view, therefore, the effect of the proposed entrance on highway conditions would pose an unacceptable risk to road safety.

11. I recognise the Parish Council's (PC's) view that the relationship with the road bridge would be better than that prevailing in the opposite direction for the existing station vehicular access. However, as I saw, the site access road provides for queuing off the highway before the car park entrance. In any case, in itself, current conditions do not justify the introduction of new sub-standard development.
12. The new car park would still leave a returning disabled traveller on the opposite side of the track to that from which they departed. Notwithstanding the slope, it may be that Station Road would provide an accessible pedestrian route for someone in a wheelchair, and this was welcomed at the hearing by a wheelchair user. However, Station Road is relatively narrow and has no footpath over the bridge. I share the Council's view that the restricted visibility caused by the hump-backed bridge would be significantly hazardous for those in a wheelchair, and others such as those with children, who may wish or need to avoid the station footbridge.
13. I acknowledge the view of the PC's access auditor that the new car park would provide useful access to the Basingstoke platform for those being dropped off or collected, providing greater convenience for both legs of a rail journey. Whilst the proposed layout does not identify a drop-off zone or mini bus stop, no doubt such an adjustment could be made. However, in my view, the proposal would be likely to create an increase in pedestrian use of the road by people who would be particularly at risk, and this reinforces my objection to the effect of the proposed vehicular entrance. I conclude that the proposal would be unacceptably hazardous to road safety, contrary to the aims and objectives of national and local policies, including LP Policy OVS2.

The effect on the character and appearance of the countryside and the setting of the village, including the effect on trees

14. It is not in dispute that the proposed site is outside the village development boundary. It lies on higher ground than the railway line and platform, and the boundary with the station is marked by a row of mature horse chestnut trees on railway land, and an oak tree within the corner of the appeal site. The station buildings date from 1848 and were designed by I K Brunel. I understand that it is one of the least altered of Brunel's wayside stations.
15. The parking area would be about 82 metres long by 31.2 metres wide according to the submitted plan. An 'ecoblock' surface finish is proposed, infilled with grass, but the Council questions its suitability, and the landscape assessment points out that it can be eroded by heavy use. Notwithstanding this, when the car park is in use, the landscape impact would be primarily dominated by parked cars. It is not in dispute that there would need to be some associated paraphernalia such as access barriers, signage, and the need for some lighting for safety and security.
16. Under the first main issue, I refer to the effect of achieving the visibility splay on the substantial indigenous hedge along the highway. Although not shown as

part of the proposed scheme, the main parties agreed at the hearing that the proposed layout could accommodate a new hedge allowing the necessary sight line. However, interested parties refer to a history of vandalism at the existing station car park, and its use as a gathering place and target for unruly and anti-social behaviour. They point out that this has resulted, amongst other things, in the repeated destruction of the car park's ticket machine, which is no longer available. Whilst such problems can occur in any public facility, the proposed car park would be more isolated, and it seems to me that a screening hedge would significantly obstruct public surveillance of the parking area. Therefore, in my view, a condition requiring replacement of the existing hedge could not be relied upon to provide similar landscape value in the long term.

17. The PC has indicated that it would accept the substitution of a proposed bund by a new hedge between the parking area and the field. However, this would not screen the parking area from public viewpoints, which would be otherwise unrelieved by any landscaping or planting proposals. To my mind, the proposal would introduce an intrusive, large-scale urbanising element in the countryside, and would be particularly obtrusive in the setting of the village on the approach from the south-east.
18. The proposal includes an access ramp from the car park to the adjacent platform, which is shown only diagrammatically on the submitted plans. It would pass between the horse chestnut trees and would need to bridge a difference in level of about 2 metres in height. Notwithstanding existing railway paraphernalia on the platform, I see no reason why such a ramp could not be installed, subject to the submission of details for later approval. Whilst this would require some raising of the low canopy of two trees, and construction in such a way as to protect their root area, I consider that this could be achieved without significant harm to the trees, or their contribution to the quality of the landscape. However, this is not sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have found to the rural landscape by the impact of the car park itself.
19. At the hearing, interested parties drew my attention to a number of alternative sites on the north-western side of the railway line, and I looked at several of these at their request. The appellant indicated that such sites would be neither available nor satisfactory for a variety of reasons. Amongst these, I saw that a private parking compound on a light industrial site adjacent to the station provides some additional parking on a commercial basis, although I am told by the Council that its planning status is currently subject to consideration. Whilst this is a brownfield site, I have no substantial evidence that it, or any other site referred to, would provide the desired number of parking spaces, or meet relevant planning policies, and I have considered the appeal proposal on its own merits. I conclude, for the reasons given above, that the proposal would be unacceptably harmful to the character and appearance of the countryside and the setting of the village, contrary to LP Policies OVS1, ENV1, ENV18 and national policies, including PPS7.

The effect on the aims and objectives of policies to promote travel by means other than the private car in the interests of sustainability.

20. The PC indicates that the Stratfield Mortimer Parish Plan, produced in 2004, included the results of a questionnaire in which, amongst other things, 47% of

people said that they would use the train more if there was reliable mini bus service to the station and 38% if there was more station parking. Since that time, the PC has initiated a minibus service between the station and the village, with grant-aid support from the District Council, which runs from Monday to Friday to link passengers with the main commuter trains. At the hearing, the PC indicated that the minibus gets crowded, and the Council's highways officer indicates that the service has seen a 30% increase in users since it started about 5 years ago, and a 15% increase in 2008 over 2007.

21. The Stratfield Mortimer Village Design Statement (VDS) was prepared with public consultation, and was adopted by the district Council as supplementary planning guidance in 2007. This identified local amenities as including a bus service to Reading, and the locally subsidised minibus service to Mortimer Station at peak times. However, it also referred to the station parking as having become inadequate for the existing population of the village.
22. The PC has support for the number of parking spaces proposed from the Station Contracts Manager of First Great Western (FGW), who indicates that the existing parking is already at 100% capacity and estimates a need for at least a further 100 spaces to encourage passenger growth at Mortimer. Amongst other things, he observes that Mortimer acts as a hub station for the surrounding area (Burghfield, Silchester etc). Comparison is made with Kemble station which acts as a hub for the Cirencester/Tetbury area. FGW and the appellant also refer to the potential use of Mortimer station in relation to travel to Madejski Stadium, and the reduction of congestion at Junction 11 of the M4. In my view, these objectives go significantly beyond any increase in parking that may be indicated by the results of the village consultations.
23. The RSS supports proposals to increase car parking at railway stations, particularly at stations associated with regional hubs. It indicates that the provision of parking at rail stations, where appropriate, should provide a level of accessibility by private car that is consistent with the overall balance of the transport system at the local level. Representations from the neighbouring Beech Hill Parish Council indicate support for some increase in parking, but some members consider the appeal proposal not suitable, and lacking a full assessment. The Council's highways officer and some interested parties are concerned that the proposed large car park is likely to increase trip generation within Mortimer, attract users from outside, and add significantly to traffic movements on local roads, becoming a park and ride facility in itself.
24. PPG13 refers to the potential for railway stations to act as park and ride sites for destinations outside the immediate locality. However, it notes that at main line stations parking provision may discourage travellers from using local bus services to connect to longer distance services. It advises that such schemes should be subject to robust assessment, including consideration of alternative sites, the impact on local amenity, and travel impacts, including traffic reduction and generation. However, the Council considers that the application has not adequately demonstrated justification for the proposed 100 additional spaces, or the level of parking that may be required to accommodate the needs of the village. Interested parties point out that developments under way only 3 miles away at M4 Junction 11 include a park and ride facility. Whether or not Mortimer should be treated as a regional hub, in my view, the appellant's

submissions fall unacceptably short of meeting the thrust of the advice of PPG13 that such schemes should be developed as an integral part of the planning and transport strategy for the area, within the regional transport and planning context.

25. I recognise the fears that increased parking would undermine the use of the minibus. I consider that other factors such as ecological awareness, price, and demand from people without access to a car, amongst other things, would continue to play some part in sustaining its use. I note that some secure cycle storage bins are provided at the station, and at the hearing the PC agreed to the Council's proposed condition requiring the submission of details of further secure cycle parking and storage within the site. However, whilst these measures complement the provision of parking, they do not justify the amount proposed.

26. I have considered the benefits of increased parking provision at the station, which would link travellers with the national rail network to Reading, Basingstoke and beyond, and enable the undertaking of significantly longer journeys that may otherwise be made by car. The Council's policies recognise that it is necessary to provide for some development in the rural area to sustain balanced rural communities. However, for the reasons given above, I am not satisfied that the proposed level of parking would contribute positively to the promotion of sustainable travel choices in the area, or accord with the aims and objectives of national, regional and local policies to promote travel by means other than the private car, including LP Policies OVS1 and TRANS1.

Other matters

27. I have considered conditions suggested by the Council, and others discussed at the hearing, but none would overcome the objections that I have found. I have considered the refusal at appeal on 5 November 2007 to permit the use of a field in Mortimer as a church car park (APP/W0340/A/07/2046205). In my view that proposal involved substantially different issues. No other matter raised is sufficient to outweigh my findings on the main issues. I conclude, therefore, that the appeal should be dismissed.

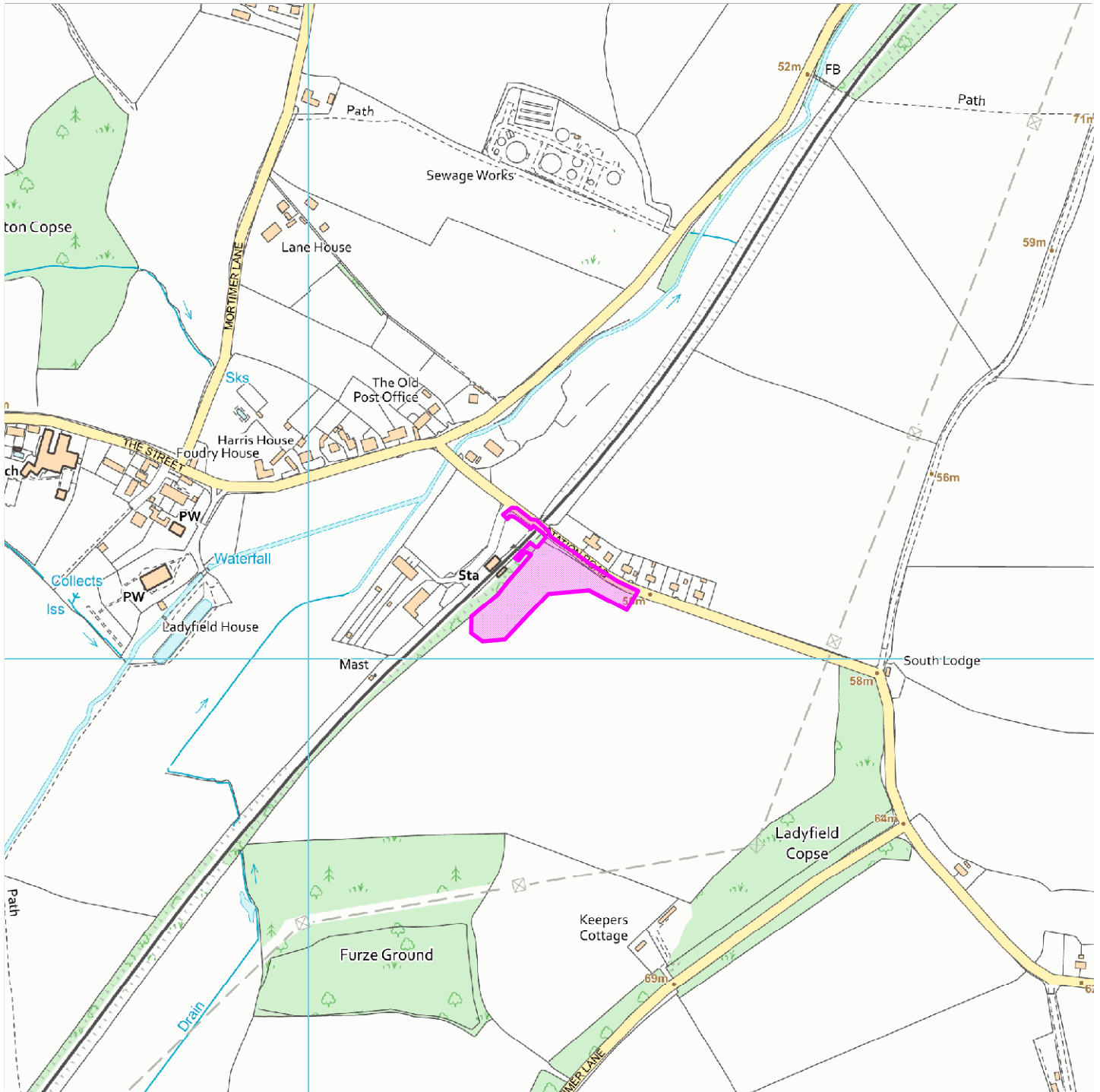
Robin Jacques

INSPECTOR

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED AT THE HEARING

- 1 Policies T4, C4, CC1 and CC6 from The South East Plan – Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East.
- 2 Timetable for the Mortimer Link bus service

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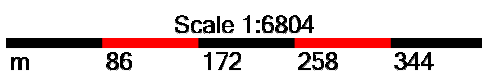
Map Centre Coordinates :

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| Organisation | West Berkshire Council |
| Department | |
| Comments | Not Set |
| Date | 27 July 2020 |
| SLA Number | 0100024151 |



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