

Notice of Meeting



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Eastern Area Planning Committee Wednesday 28th October 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

Please note: As resolved at the Council meeting held on 10 September 2020, public speaking rights are 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 26 October 2020. Written submissions will be read aloud at the Planning Committee. Please e-mail your submission to planapps@westberks.gov.uk

Those members of the public who have provided a written submission may attend the Planning Committee to answer any questions that Members of the Committee may ask in relation to their submission. Members of the public who have provided a written submission need to notify the Planning Team (planapps@westberks.gov.uk) by no later than 4.00pm on Tuesday 27 October 2020 if they wish to attend the remote Planning Committee to answer any questions from Members of the Committee.

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.

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.



Agenda - Eastern Area Planning Committee to be held on Wednesday, 28 October 2020
(continued)

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, 28 October 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

Agenda

Part I

Page No.

1. **Apologies**
To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting.
 2. **Minutes** 7 - 12
To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 26 August 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: 20/01480/FUL - Glenvale Nurseries, Hungerford Lane, Bradfield Southend** 13 - 52
- Proposal:** Demolition of existing outbuilding and polytunnels and erection of a building in flexible use for storage or distribution (Use Class B8) and/or for any light industrial process within Use Class E, with associated access track and parking area.
- Location:** Glenvale Nurseries, Hungerford Lane, Bradfield Southend
- Applicant:** Mr and Mrs Varley
- Recommendation:** Delegated to the Head of Development and Planning to grant planning permission subject to conditions.



Agenda - Eastern Area Planning Committee to be held on Wednesday, 28 October 2020
(continued)

- (2) **Application No. & Parish: 20/00674/FUL - Land to the South east of Mortimer Station, Station Road, Mortimer** 53 - 132
- 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:** Delegated to the Head of Development and Planning to refuse planning permission

Items for Information

5. **Appeal Decisions relating to Eastern Area Planning** 133 - 140
Purpose: To inform Members of the results of recent appeal decisions relating to the Eastern Area Planning Committee.

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, 26 AUGUST 2020

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

Also Present: Stephen Chard (Principal Policy Officer), Bob Dray (Development Control Team Leader), Kim Maher (Solicitor) and Linda Pye (Principal Policy Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Jeremy Cottam and Councillor Joanne Stewart

PART I

21. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 August 2020 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendments:

Item 17 Minutes – 19/01172/OUTMAJ – Land North of The Green, Theale: The Planning Officer confirmed that he was in agreement with the comments made by Councillor Alan Macro in relation to the drawing for the pedestrian crossing being removed from the conditions and the decision notice. This would now be dealt with as part of the s106 Agreement.

Item 19(1) – Application No. 20/00674/FUL – Land to the South East of Mortimer Station, Station Road, Mortimer – Page 13, fourth bullet point: 'NPD' should read 'DPD'. The last two sentences to be amended to read – Although it was on an identified site, Theale Green Primary School, which was also granted planning permission *despite being* outside the settlement boundary, was granted permission because it complied with policy and there was an identified need. He felt that *this* proposal in question would have a less urbanising effect.

22. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

23. Schedule of Planning Applications

(1) Application No. & Parish: 20/01134/HOUSE - Greenfields, Burghfield

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(1)) concerning Planning Application 20/01134/HOUSE in respect of a Section 73 Variation of condition (4) - garage use restricted of approved 18/01467/HOUSE – Erection of new garage with ancillary residential space on the first floor.

The Planning Officer advised that this application sought to vary condition 4 to allow an elderly relative to occupy the first floor of the now substantially constructed detached garage as a residential annexe to the main dwelling house at Greenfields. It had been referred to Committee by the Development Control Manager for consideration in light of

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the given justification for relaxing the restriction and recognising the size of the host dwelling and the fact that the intended occupant had resided in the host dwelling for some considerable time. Condition 4 restricted the use of the building as follows:

'The garage hereby permitted shall be used solely for ancillary residential purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the existing dwelling known as Greenfields, Burghfield. No trade, business or commercial enterprise of any kind whatsoever shall be carried on, in or from the garage other than for purposes that are ancillary to the enjoyment of the main dwelling, nor shall it be used for additional bedroom accommodation or for any form of human habitation.'

A revised floor plan had been submitted which showed that at ground floor level the garage would retain two enclosed parking bays with an enclosed staircase to the first floor. The first floor accommodation would provide a living space, a bedroom, a kitchenette and a bathroom. It was noted that the dimensions and appearance of the detached garage would not be altered as a result of the proposal.

The addendum to the Planning Statement highlighted that objectors had advised that the Applicant's mother had always lived at Greenfields and certainly for the last 20 years. The applicant had confirmed that this was correct and agreed that paragraph 2.3 of the Planning Statement could be regarded as misleading but the new building presented an opportunity to provide the Applicant's mother with her own accommodation which would enable all parties to enjoy a greater degree of privacy. However, it was felt that the fact that the mother had resided at the same address for some time supported the assertion that the annexe accommodation would be used as an intrinsic part of the existing dwelling.

The Planning Officer stated that the annexe was subordinate to the host dwelling which was a five bedroom property and it was felt that the detached garage would be acceptable as an annexe as it was modest in size and was in close proximity to the main house. Page 27 of the agenda set out revised conditions which would control the use of the garage building.

Ward Member Representation:

Councillor Graham Bridgman, as Ward Member, stated that the fundamental question was, if this restriction was not justified two years ago, why had it been imposed?

This application was predicated upon the need for a granny flat for the Applicant's mother due to Covid, as set out in the original planning statement at 2.3:

"With the Coronavirus outbreak, the Applicant had invited her mother to come and stay with them at Greenfields. Her mother was at higher risk from coronavirus and was following advice to self-isolate. They did not anticipate that her mother would return to living independently".

That was the raison d'être behind this application.

That statement got tested, both by the objectors and by Councillor Bridgman, because it was indicated that, far from having moved in due to Covid, the Applicant's mother - Mrs Patricia M Gore - had been living there for at least 33 years. She was the Mrs P M Gore shown in the table of planning applications at 2.1 of the agenda pack, as the applicant for applications dating back to 1986. Councillor Bridgman referred to paragraph 6.4 of the agenda pack, where the agent had confirmed that, far from suddenly arriving due to Covid, the Applicant's mother had *always* lived at Greenfields.

Councillor Bridgman asked what justification there was to remove a planning restriction that had only been imposed in 2018 at a time when Mrs Gore senior had already been

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living there for over 30 years. He presumed that Planning Officers would have had a good reason to impose it two years ago, otherwise why would they have done so.

Councillor Bridgman felt that nothing had really changed. This was, and still was, a four bedroom, three bathroom property with three people living in it – the applicant, her husband and Mrs Gore senior.

If it was not necessary, or in the words of the condition, *imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012), Policies ADPP6 and CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006) and the Parish Design Statement for Burghfield*, why had the applicant not appealed it in 2018?

Member Questions to the Ward Member:

Councillor Richard Somner queried whether the main dwelling was a four or five bedroom property as the Planning Officer had stated that it was five and Councillor Bridgman had referred to it being a four bedroom property. Councillor Bridgman confirmed that he had referred to the planning history of the site and had looked at the plans in relation to the latest application. The Planning Officer responded that there was a study which could be used as a fifth bedroom.

In respect of the condition, this was a standard condition for outbuildings of this nature. If a specific proposal was brought forward then it would be considered on its own merits where both the physical and functional relationship would be considered. Nothing had changed in planning terms in respect of this application in that it was still a single family occupying the site. The Planning Officer was content that whilst the recommended conditions relaxed the restrictions of the specific use of the first floor, it maintained the core restrictions necessary to prevent a material change of use to form two dwelling houses.

Questions to Officers:

Councillor Tony Linden referred to page 38 of the agenda and in particular paragraph 1.6 where it was noted that there would be no separate telephone or television connections to the annexe and he was concerned for the welfare of the applicant's mother. The Planning Officer stated that concerns for the welfare of an individual was not a planning matter.

Councillor Alan Law referred to page 22 of the agenda and queried why the issue around the postal address was a Highways matter. The Planning Officer responded that this was a common practice when an application was made for an annexe.

Councillor Richard Somner asked if Condition 4 applied to the whole unit. The Planning Officer stated that it would be an issue if someone ran a business or accepted deliveries from the unit but it would not affect home working which was becoming more common practice now.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon felt that as there had been some confusion over the living arrangements of the applicant's mother it was queried whether this application should be considered. The Planning Officer confirmed that planning permission went with the land after considering the merits of the case. Planning Officers had looked at the scale of the accommodation and whether it was subservient to the main dwelling. The key point of Condition 4 was that the annexe would only be used for purposes ancillary to the main house and therefore it could not be a separate planning unit.

Councillor Royce Longton asked if the Planning Officer felt that the conditions were adequate. The Planning Officer responded that Condition 3 in relation to the use of the

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first floor was key but he was of the opinion that the conditions had been set at the right level.

Councillor Alan Law queried why the Highways Officer had referred to the utilities in the consultation response and why had this not been included as a condition to the planning permission. Utilities had been mentioned in the Addendum to the Planning Statement and was an important issue. The Planning Officer stated that if Members were concerned about that then a condition could be included.

Debate:

In considering the above application Councillor Richard Somner referred to a property local to him which had been turned into a commercial enterprise whereby rooms were rented out and he queried at what point did that apply to this property and who would enforce that. He had grave concerns that this particular property was the subject of planning creep and there was the issue around misleading information being given. Councillor Alan Law agreed that the planning history set out in the report did support that view.

Councillor Geoff Mayes had concerns about an elderly person accessing the first floor.

Councillor Graham Pask shared the concerns raised by other Members of the Committee as the site history was extensive. However, it was necessary to consider the application in planning terms – planning permission ran with the land rather than an individual. He agreed that a further condition would be useful in terms of the utility services to the unit. On balance he was proposing to support the Officer recommendation to grant planning permission subject to an additional condition in relation to utility services. This was seconded by Councillor Nassar Kessell.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon referred to the comment made earlier in relation to planning by stealth and he queried whether it would be possible to limit further development on this site. It was frustrating that this application had come relatively quickly after the previous one in 2018. The Planning Officer advised that the planning history was a relevant planning consideration and each application would need to be considered on its own merits. He confirmed that he was happy to include a condition in relation to utilities and services but this would not include the postal address. He also advised that if the application went to appeal then the Planning Inspector was usually satisfied with the conditions imposed by the local authority. However, any breach of those conditions would be an issue for Planning Enforcement. The Planning Officer did not have a concern regarding costs should the application be considered at appeal.

The Motion to support the Officer recommendation was put to the vote and approved.

RESOLVED that the Head of Development and Planning be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

1. Approved plans

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

- (a) Drawing numbers 18005_AL-SP-12 Revision P02, 18005_AL-E-10 Revision P03 and 18005_AL-P-10 Revision P01 (Proposed Roof Plan only) received on 29 May 2018 and the 1:1250 Location Plan and drawing number 18005_AL-SP-11 Revision P01 (excluding Ground Floor Plan) received on 15 June 2018; all submitted pursuant to application 18/01467/HOUSE.

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(b) Drawing number 2039/PL/04 Revision A, submitted pursuant to application 20/01134/HOUSE.

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

2. Materials

The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall be as specified on the plans and application form of application 18/01467/HOUSE.

Reason: To ensure that the external materials respond to local character. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006), Supplementary Planning Guidance 04/2 House Extensions (July 2004) and the Parish Design Statement for Burghfield.

3. Use of first floor

The first floor accommodation of the garage building shall be used only as an integral part of the existing dwelling, and for purposes ancillary and/or incidental to the residential use of the dwelling known as Greenfields, Burghfield. The first floor shall not be used as a separate dwelling unit, and no separate curtilage shall be created.

Reason: The creation of a separate planning unit would be unacceptable in the interests of ensuring a sustainable pattern of development, and respecting the character and appearance of the area. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies ADPP1, ADPP6, CS1, CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006) and the Village Design Statement for Burghfield.

4. Use of ground floor

The ground floor of the garage building shall be used solely for purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the existing dwelling known as Greenfields, Burghfield. No trade, business or commercial enterprise of any kind whatsoever shall be carried on, in or from the garage other than for purposes that are ancillary to the enjoyment of the main dwelling, nor shall it be used for additional bedroom accommodation or for any form of human habitation.

Reason: The creation of a separate planning unit would be unacceptable in the interests of ensuring a sustainable pattern of development, and respecting the character and appearance of the area. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies ADPP1, ADPP6, CS1, CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006) and the Village Design Statement for Burghfield.

24. Appeal Decisions relating to Eastern Area Planning

Members noted the outcome of appeal decisions relating to the Eastern Area.

Councillor Alan Law thanked the Planning Officer for providing the summary of recent appeal decisions which was much appreciated.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 7.32pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

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Agenda Item 4.(1)

Item No.	Application No. and Parish	Statutory Target Date	Proposal, Location, Applicant
(1)	20/01480/FUL Bradfield Parish Council	1 st September 2020 ¹	Demolition of existing outbuilding and polytunnels and erection of a building in flexible use for storage or distribution (Use Class B8) and/or for any light industrial process within Use Class E, with associated access track and parking area. Glenvale Nurseries, Hungerford Lane, Bradfield Southend Mr and Mrs Varley

¹ Extension of time agreed with applicant until 28th October 2020

The application can be viewed on the Council's website at the following link:
<http://planning.westberks.gov.uk/rpp/index.asp?caseref=20/01480/FUL>

Recommendation Summary: Delegated to the Head of Development and Planning to grant planning permission subject to conditions.

Ward Member: Councillor Ross MacKinnon

Reason for Committee Determination: Ten or more representations objecting to the application have been received and the application is recommended for approval.

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

Name: Sarah Melton
Job Title: Senior Planning Officer
Tel No: 01635 519111
Email: Sarah.Melton1@westberks.gov.uk

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of existing outbuilding and polytunnels and erection of a building in flexible use for storage or distribution (Use Class B8) and/or for any light industrial process within Use Class E, with associated access track and parking area.
- 1.2 The application site is located in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and outside of a defined settlement boundary. The site is located within the open countryside in terms of the Local Plan.
- 1.3 The site is situated off of Hungerford Lane, to the rear of dwelling known as Swallows Rest. The closest settlement to the site is Bradfield Southend, of which the closest western edge of the settlement boundary is approximately 625 metres when measured in a straight line on a map.
- 1.4 The application site forms part of the wider “Glenvale Nurseries” site. The red line of the site is the eastern most part of Glenvale Nurseries and sits behind the dwelling known as Swallows Rest.
- 1.5 The land within the red line currently consists of three existing structures; two polythene tunnels and a detached timber shed. In total these structures have a footprint of approximately 345sqm. The maximum height of any structure on the site is 3.8m.
- 1.6 A Lawful Development Certificate granted by the Planning Inspectorate (appeal reference 3165648) confirms that the current lawful use of the site is a mixed use (*Sui Generis*), consisting of:
 - a) A horticultural plant nursery (agriculture),
 - b) The retail sale of imported plants and garden sundries products to the public, and
 - c) The wholesale supply of plants and garden sundries to the commercial trade.
- 1.7 The site is mostly screened from Hungerford Lane by a large hedge. There is a commercial style metal gate to the north west of the site, this is the existing (hard standing) access to the nursery. The southern, eastern and western boundaries consist of a 1.8m close board fence. To the west of the site is a public footpath (Bradfield 1/1), which runs from Hungerford Lane towards Bucklebury Common to the south. To the north of Hungerford Lane, opposite the site is open countryside. Another public footpath (Bradfield 2/1) crosses this land heading north-east to Cock Lane.
- 1.8 The proposal scheme would remove the existing ‘polytunnels’ and shed. The development would consist of a single building, shown to contain four units. The proposed building will have a footprint of approximately 157sqm, an eaves height of 2.7m, a ridge height of 4.2m, a depth 6.4m and a length of 24m (measurements exclude the bike store). The north-western elevation includes four entrance doors and four commercial doors. The corrugated sheet metal roof includes eight roof lights. The elevational treatment is a mixture of brick and timber. There are no openings on the side elevations, they are constructed of vertical timber. The south-eastern roof slope includes two rows of solar panels and two roof lights. The south east elevation is also of vertical timber.
- 1.9 Cycle storage is proposed along the north-eastern elevation. This is a lean-to timber frame with corrugated sheet metal roof addition to the main building, and would provide secure, covered cycle storage for four bicycles.

- 1.10 The internal layout of each until is a “shell”, measuring approximately 36sqm each including a w/c.
- 1.11 The proposed development includes a new access road through the site. The proposed access is from the existing entrance point off of Hungerford Road and runs parallel to the neighbouring public footpath (Bradfield 1/1). The road measures 4.5 in width and includes passing points within the site.
- 1.12 The external area is proposed to be hardstanding with space allocated for eight car parking spaces, including two electric charging points.
- 1.13 The agent has submitted a BREEAM pre-assessment, stating that the proposed development will achieve a BREEAM rating of “Excellent”.

2. Planning History

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

Application	Proposal	Decision / Date
20/00771/CLASSR	Proposed change of use of two buildings from agricultural to a flexible commercial used under Class R.	Refused 17.04.2020
19/00221/FULD	Demolition of Glenvale Garden Centre and replace with 1 dwelling, retaining the existing entrance onto Hungerford Lane.	Refused 17.04.2019 Appeal: 3234385 Dismissed 14.11.2019
18/02190/FULD	Demolition of Glenvale Garden Centre and double garage and replace with 1 detached chalet style dwelling, retaining the existing entrance onto Hungerford Lane.	Refused 25.10.2018
16/02922/OUTD	Outline application for the demolition of garden centre and replace with 4 x custom build dwellings - Matters to be considered: Access.	Refused 22.12.2016 Appeal: 3166113 Dismissed 2.05.2018
16/02923/CERTE	Lawful Development Certificate for “Retail Garden Centre”. See paragraph 1.6 for explanation of confirmed use.	Refused 16.12.2016 Appeal: 3165648 Allowed 26.10.2017
16/01193/OUTD	Outline application for the demolition of Glenvale Garden Centre and associated buildings and replace with 5 x self-build/ custom build houses with	Refused 06.09.2016

	associated garages using existing access. Matters to be considered: Access.	Appeal: 3158031 Dismissed 8.03.2017
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3. Procedural Matters

- 3.1 A screening opinion has been issued under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. This concludes that the proposal is not EIA development and therefore an Environmental Statement is not required to accompany the application.
- 3.2 A site notice was displayed on 29.07.2020 at the front of the site. The deadline for representations expired on 19.08.2020. The application has therefore been publicised in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.
- 3.3 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a levy charged on most new development to pay for new infrastructure required as a result of the 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). B8 and B2 floor space is currently zero rated.
- 3.4 The application has been subject to some minor amendments to address technical issues raised during its consideration. The original application was presented as including uses in B1, B2 and B8 Uses Classes. Early engagement between the case officer and the agent resulted in the description being amended to remove B1 from the proposal scheme. The reasons for this was due to potential conflict with policy CS9 and for reasons relating to vehicle movements. Some minor amendments to the design have also taken place, including the provision of passing points for vehicles within the site and a small repositioning of the building further north within the site. Finally, the application description has been further amended to replace the proposal for general industrial use (Class B2) with "light" industrial uses within Class E, thus reducing the potential impact on neighbouring amenity.

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.

Bradfield Parish Council:	<p>Original proposal</p> <p>Bradfield Parish Council objects to this application on the grounds of insufficient information in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is assumed that Glenvale Nurseries will continue to operate from a smaller site, but this is not clear from the proposals.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no information about how the existing access to Glenvale Nurseries will interact with the proposed access to these units. • There is no plan for noise mitigation. • There are no lighting plans; this site is within the AONB and dark skies need to be maintained. • There is no information on waste removal from the site. <p>If WBC is minded to approve this application, it is suggested that there should be a condition on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Times for usage of the units in order to maintain amenity value for local residents. • That the curtilage of this proposal should not sold off separately to Glenvale Nurseries. <p>Amended proposal</p> <p>No objections</p>
Bucklebury Parish Council:	No objections
WBC Highways:	No objections subject to conditions
Drainage:	No comments. Advice to applicant on management of surface water drainage.
Environmental Health:	No objection subject to conditions limiting type of occupier and opening times.
Economic Development Officer:	Support
Trees:	No objections subject to a landscaping condition
Public Rights of Way:	No objection
Rambling Society:	No response received
Joint Emergency Planning:	No adverse comments to make
Environment Agency:	No response received
Office for Nuclear Regulation:	No comments
Thames Water:	No response received

North Wessex Downs AONB:	No response received
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Public representations

- 4.2 Representations have been received from 22 contributors, 12 of which support, and 10 of which object to the proposal.
- 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:

Support

- Minimal visual impact
- Support the rural economy
- Support current business
- Prevent villages become commuter hubs
- Beneficial to community
- Economic growth following COVID-19 recession
- Potential to support start-up businesses
- Local employment
- Minimise carbon emission
- Support an independent business

Object

- Unsustainable location
- Increase in traffic
- Concerns over septic tank and drainage
- Lack of pedestrian route
- Visitors will travel to site
- Insufficient turning circle
- Issues of noise
- Agricultural restriction on Oak Lodge
- Located in AONB
- Site is not in sole agricultural use
- Trading hours should be limited
- Uses not appropriate for residential area
- Drainage and sewage issues on the site
- Submitted photographs are not accurate
- Inadequate screening
- Result in overlooking of neighbouring properties
- Contrary to ADPP1, CS9 ENV16 and CS10
- Unacceptable impact on residential amenity
- Potential for industrial machinery
- Lack of evidence for justified need
- Result in overlooking and loss of privacy for neighbours
- Impact on dark skies
- Question of security outside business hours
- Located in the open countryside
- Number of planning applications on the site have already been refused
- Not in keeping with character and appearance of the area

- Could lead to later applications for residential development
- Will make little contribution to the economics of the surrounding area
- Will result in smell, dust and noise pollution for neighbouring properties
- Impact on wildlife
- Unknown how commercial waste will be disposed of
- Inconsistencies in the application
- Proposed units are very small, how can a business run such a space
- Not a viable business case
- Application is an attempt to reclassify land

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, ADPP5, CS5, CS8, CS9, CS10, CS11, CS13, CS14, CS15, CS16, CS17, CS18 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 (WBCS).
- Policies OVS5, OVS6 and TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

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

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2019-24
- WBC Quality Design SPD (2006)
- WBC Planning Obligations SPD (2015)
- WBC Sustainable Drainage Systems SPD (2018)

6. Appraisal

6.1 The main issues for consideration in this application are:

- Whether the proposal is in accordance with the development plan;
- The potential economic benefits;
- Whether the proposal respects the character and appearance of the area, and conserves the special qualities of the AONB;
- Traffic generation, access and parking;
- Compatibility with existing uses in terms of noise and other impacts;
- Neighbouring living conditions.

Principle of development

6.2 The most important policies for determining whether the principle of development is acceptable are policies ADPP1, ADPP5, CS9 and CS10 of the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy includes a Spatial Strategy (ADPP1 and ADPP5) that provides a broad indication of the overall scale of development in the district, applying the principles of

sustainable development, and based on defined spatial areas and a settlement hierarchy. Policies CS9 and CS10 relate specifically to employment and the economy.

- 6.3 The site is located outside of any defined settlement boundary, and is therefore located in “open countryside” in terms of policy ADPP1. Policy ADPP1 states that most development will be located within or adjacent to settlements included within the settlement hierarchy. However, the policy does make an allowance for appropriate limited development in the countryside focused on addressing identified needs and maintaining a strong rural economy.
- 6.4 In accordance with policy ADPP1, the scale and density of development will be related to the site’s current or proposed accessibility, character and surroundings. Significant intensification of employment generating and other intensive uses will be avoided within areas which lack sufficient supporting infrastructure, facilities or services or where opportunities to access them by public transport, cycling and walking are limited.
- 6.5 Policy ADPP5 is the spatial strategy for the North Wessex Downs AONB. Recognising the area as a national landscape designation, the policy envisions that development will conserve and enhance the local distinctiveness, sense of place and setting of the AONB whilst preserving the strong sense of remoteness, tranquillity and dark night skies, particularly on the open downland. In terms of the economy, the policy states that small, local businesses will be supported, encouraged and protected within the AONB providing local job opportunities and maintaining the rural economy.
- 6.6 Whilst the proposed development is located outside of a defined settlement boundary, policy ADPP1 does allow for limited development in the open countryside which does not result in significant intensification and where it assists in maintaining the rural economy. Small scale economic development is also specifically supported within the AONB, subject to the overarching protection of the landscape. The site is not within an accessible location, as it is remote from local services and public transport opportunities are limited; this limits the intensity of economic development that is appropriate in the location. However, overall the nature and scale of the proposed development is considered to accord with the above Spatial Strategy.
- 6.7 Policy CS9 relates to the location and type of business development. Strategically across the plan period (2006-2026), policy CS9 seeks to manage the growth of B1 floor space (now incorporated into Use Class E) to meet future requirements and retain a portfolio of B8 uses in suitable locations. Policy CS9 states that proposals for industry, distribution and storage uses will be directed to the district’s defined Protected Employment Areas, and existing suitably located employment sites and premises.
- 6.8 Paragraph C (Managing the scale, type and intensification of business development) of policy CS9 states:
- “A range of types and sizes of employment sites and premises will be encouraged throughout the District to meet the needs of the local economy. Proposals for business development should be in keeping with the surrounding environment, not conflict with existing uses, and promote sustainable transport.*
- More efficient use of existing sites and premises should be made in order to attract inward investment, respond to modern business requirements, and meet the demand for employment land over the plan period. The Council will promote the intensification, redevelopment, and upgrade of existing, vacant and/or derelict employment sites and premises for business development.”*
- 6.9 The existing site comprises a single rural enterprise known as Glenvale Nurseries. The site is in mixed use comprising elements of horticulture, retail sale and wholesale trade. This use applies across the whole site, which is a single planning unit. Through the

current application the existing rural enterprise is seeking to evolve in order to adapt and survive in the changes that have taken place within the industry.

- 6.10 The current application seeks to provide new light industrial, storage and distribution uses on a speculative basis; there is no definite end user identified for the development. Notwithstanding this, there is potential for the proposal scheme to accommodate start-up businesses. This is supported by policy CS9.
- 6.11 Due to the modest size of the proposed units and the total proposed floorspace, the proposed uses are not assessed as conflicting with the existing mixed use on the remainder of the site. The proposal scheme would provide more efficient use of the existing premises, and thus make a positive contribution to the local rural economy.
- 6.12 Due to the location of the site within the open countryside, where accessibility is poor and occupiers would most likely be reliant on private vehicles, which is environmentally unsustainable, this must be balanced against other positive criteria offered by the proposal scheme. Overall, the nature and scale of the proposed development is considered to accord with policy CS9.
- 6.13 Policy CS10 specifically relates to the rural economy. It encourages the diversification of the rural economy, particularly where they are located in or adjacent to Rural Service Centres and Service Villages, and states that existing small and medium sized enterprises within the rural areas will be supported in order to provide local job opportunities and maintain the vitality of smaller rural settlements.
- 6.14 The existing use is partly a form of agriculture (horticulture), and the supporting text of policy CS10 recognises that there have been changes in the agricultural industry over recent years. The supporting text also identifies that there is a continued need to protect and support the development of start-up businesses and that adequate provision should be made for them throughout the district. Although Bradfield Southend is defined as a Service Village, the application site is located some distance from its boundary. However, the scale of development proposed is considered commensurate with the existing use and location of the site.
- 6.15 The proposal scheme is supported by policy CS10.
- 6.16 Paragraph 83 of the NPPF (2019) seeks to support the rural economy, it states that planning policies and decision should enable:
- a) *sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
 - b) *the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- 6.17 One of the main aims of the NPPF (2019) is to ensure that new development is sustainable. Whilst the proposal scheme is not in an accessible location (reducing its environmental sustainability), when looking to support the rural economy paragraph 84 states that development may have to be located beyond existing settlement boundaries in locations that are not well served by public transport:

“Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling

or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.”

- 6.18 The Council’s Economic Development Team has provided a consultation response, which is supportive of the application (full response available via link at top of report). It highlights that the business spaces created by this proposal will be able to help facilitate the growth of other small local businesses and self-employed people. It is stated that small, affordable spaces like the ones proposed are a valuable component of the local business property offering as they provide an ‘incubator’ for businesses that cannot afford large spaces. A recent study by Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership also indicated that there is not sufficient availability of such units.
- 6.19 Overall, the proposal would bring economic benefits to the rural economy, and the proposed scale of the new floor space is considered appropriate when balancing the economic benefits against the poor accessibility of the site. It is concluded that the proposal is in accordance with the Spatial Strategy the Council’s planning policies for the economy and employment.

Design and conservation of the AONB

- 6.20 Core Strategy Policy CS14 states that new development must demonstrate a high quality and sustainable design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area, and makes a positive contribution to the quality of life in West Berkshire. It further states that design and layout must be informed by the wider context, having regard not just to the immediate area, but to the wider locality.
- 6.21 Core Strategy Policy CS19 outlines that in order to ensure that the diversity and local distinctiveness of the landscape character of the District is conserved and enhanced, the natural, cultural, and functional components of its character will be considered as a whole. In adopting this holistic approach, particular regard has been given to the sensitivity of the area to change and ensuring that the new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and design in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character.
- 6.22 The location of the site within the open countryside of the AONB, increases its sensitivity to adverse change. The site is an existing rural enterprise, and whilst the existing premises does not make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area, it is largely shielded from the public realm, and such sites not wholly out of keeping with the pattern of development in the area.
- 6.23 The proposal scheme will result in the removal of two polytunnels and a timber shed on the site. The proposed building is for a relatively basic design, which includes external materials of brick, timber and corrugated metal sheeting. The highest point of the development will 4.2m from floor level. Owing to the overall scale of the proposed development and its location within the wider Glenvale Nurseries site, it is relatively unobtrusive within its setting and the AONB. The design in itself is of no great merit, however it is also of a low impact and will see the removal of the existing polytunnels.
- 6.24 Third parties have raised concerns as regards to light spillage. The proposal scheme includes ten small (0.6sq.m) roof lights. Due to the commercial nature of the proposed development, the use of the site outside of daylight hours will be limited. Additionally, a planning condition is proposed which would limit the hours in which the units can be used. With these controls it is considered that the conservation of dark night skies will be maintained.

- 6.25 On balance, the proposal scheme is considered to have a neutral impact in terms of its design and impact on the surrounding AONB. The proposal is considered to comply with the aforementioned policies.

Highways

- 6.26 A Transport Statement (TS) from consultants Granville has been submitted as part of the application, this has been reviewed by the Council's Highway Officer. The TS is based on a new building with a gross floor area (GFA) of 144m². The new building will consist of four separate units each with a GFA of 36m².
- 6.27 The development will use the existing access onto the public highway that serves the car park for the nursery. Visibility splays of 2.4 x 90 metres to the left on leaving the site and 2.4 x 130 metres are in existence to the right. This is considered to be acceptable by the Highway Officer.
- 6.28 Car parking standards for commercial uses are provided in Appendix 5 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007). The standards suggest a maximum provision of one space per 25m² for B1 (now part of Class E) and B8 development. This equates to a maximum provision of six car parking spaces. The proposed development will provide eight car parking spaces which is considered to be acceptable. The proposal scheme also includes two electric car charging points, which is welcomed to promote the uptake of electric vehicles.
- 6.29 The proposal also complies with the cycle parking standards provided in the West Berkshire District Council Cycle and Motorcycle Advice and Standards for New Development 2014.
- 6.30 As detailed in Section 4.0 of the TS, to calculate the expected traffic generation for the proposal, the Trip Rate Information Computer System (TRICS) database has been used. This is quite standard methodology of calculating traffic generation. TRICS is a Republic of Ireland and UK wide database of traffic surveys of many uses including the proposed. It is noted from the TS that Greater London, town centre and edge of town centre sites have been excluded. It would therefore seem that the use of TRICS, and the way that it has been used in this particular case, is acceptable.
- 6.31 From TRICS it is projected that the proposal will generate 17 vehicle movements per day (circa 8.5 in, 8.5 out). According to Section 1.0 of the TS, the existing nursery site generated 46 and 86 vehicle movements per day during the winter and summer seasons respectively. The Highway Officer has noted some of the concerns on traffic generation from objectors, but has found no reason to doubt the above figures.
- 6.32 The site is within an unsustainable location. It is highly unlikely that travel will take place to and from the site other than private motor vehicles. However as there should be a decrease in traffic generation, the highways officer has not objected to the proposal on sustainability grounds.
- 6.33 The site layout appears acceptable, but the Highway Officer has expressed concern that larger vehicles will attend the site than the 7.7 metre long fire tender shown in the TS. The Highway Officer would prefer that the access within the site be widened and enlarged. The width of the access is only 4.5 metres wide. This is large enough for small vehicles to pass. For a large and small vehicle to pass, a width of 4.8 metres is required. Ideally 4.8 metres should have been provided throughout, especially where the access joins the public highway. However some passing places have been provided and the Highway Officer considers the projected level of traffic to be too low to object any further to the proposed access. They also consider the number of larger vehicles that will attend

the site will be very low. Should one attend, the provision of the passing places near the bend will enable easier access around the bend.

- 6.34 Overall, no objections are raised by the Highway Authority, subject to the imposition of conditions to secure the timely provision of the access road, parking and turning spaces, cycle storage and electric vehicle charging points.

Noise and disturbance

- 6.35 Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development.

- 6.36 Small scale storage and distribution (B8) uses are of low concern in terms of noise and pollution, particularly given the small size of the building.

- 6.37 Industrial processes, as defined under the Use Classes Order, includes a process for or incidental to any of the following purposes in the course of any trade or business other than agriculture, and other than a use carried out in or adjacent to a mine or quarry:

- a) the making of any article or part of any article (including a ship or vessel, or a film, video or sound recording);
- b) the altering, repairing, maintaining, ornamenting, finishing, cleaning, washing, packing, canning, adapting for sale, breaking up or demolition of any article; or
- c) the getting, dressing or treatment of minerals.

- 6.38 The application previously included proposals for “general industrial” uses under Use Class B2. By definition, industrial uses under Class B2 can include uses which “may not be appropriate in a residential area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit.” Planning and Environmental Health Officers have given consideration to how planning conditions could be used to permit such a use of the site without risk to neighbouring amenity, but were unable to find an acceptable solution. The applicant therefore agreed to amend the application to replace the proposal for “general industrial” (B2) use with “light industrial” use under Class E (a new class which incorporates the former light industrial Use Class B1). By definition, industrial uses under Class E only include uses “*which can be carried out in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit.*”

- 6.39 The development is speculative in that no specific end users are proposed within the application. It is considered that, to an extent, the size of the building and units will automatically limit the variety of uses and intensity of operations that could take place on the site.

- 6.40 A third party has commissioned and submitted their own noise survey for the proposal scheme. This survey concludes that “dependant on the type and intensity of the proposed commercial development adjacent to the site, noise generating activities would result in a significant adverse impact.” This survey has been reviewed by Environmental Health, who return the following comments: “*In my opinion there is some uncertainty over the background noise level. As the site was not operating in normal conditions then this is not really a typical background noise level. A lot of assumptions have been made with regard to noise from the proposed activities emanating from the site. No calculations are submitted. Also these noises are highly unlikely to be*

continuous throughout the day and a worst case scenario has been looked at. No consideration has been given to the uncertainties of the assessment e.g. distances, ground conditions, barriers and the noise source.”

- 6.41 Environmental Health raised no objections to the proposal scheme when it included B2 uses, subject to a condition limiting the precise B2 uses on the site, such as vehicle repair and respraying, any maintenance activities, metal and wood fabrication, in addition to an hours of work condition. However, as B2 uses cover such a broad range of potential uses, it has not been possible to devise conditions to make a B2 use acceptable. Hence the application was amended to omit B2 uses and replace them with industrial uses under Class E.
- 6.42 In its revised form, the proposed uses are considered to be compatible with existing uses on and adjoining the site in terms of noise and disturbance, subject to the recommended conditions.

Neighbouring light, privacy and outlook

- 6.43 During the application process the proposed development was moved within the site, placing the footprint north-eastwards.
- 6.44 Appendix 1 of this report includes a map showing the approximate distances from neighbouring properties for the proposed and existing developments. The distances between existing buildings currently on site and neighbouring properties ranges between 5.5m and 39.6m. The distances between neighbouring properties and the proposed building ranges between 17.1m and 47m. The proposed development is set further away from all neighbouring properties to that currently on site. Given these separation distances, and having regard to the existing layout of buildings on the site, the proposal is not considered to result in any significant loss of daylight or sunlight, to result in any material harm to outlook, or have any overbearing impact on neighbouring properties.
- 6.45 The only windows proposed as part of the development are roof lights. Due to the angle height of the roof lights they are not assessed as resulting in any material overlooking or loss of privacy.

BREEAM

- 6.46 A BREEAM pre-assessment has been submitted with the application, stating that the proposal scheme will achieve a BREEAM “Excellent” rating as required by policy CS15. No practical or economic limitations to achieving this rating have been raised. A condition is proposed ensure that this rating is achieved on site.

Other matters

- 6.47 The application relates to the land outlined in red. The remainder of the Glenvale Nurseries site would remain in its existing mixed use, and could continue to operate alongside the proposed uses.
- 6.48 It is noted that the Parish Council request that the curtilage of this proposal should not be sold of separately to Glenvale Nurseries. The planning system is concerned with the use of land rather than land ownership. The application has been assessed in terms of the existing and proposed uses and their impacts.
- 6.49 The application form does not detail the proposed foul sewage disposal measures, and it is understood that the premises is served by a shared septic tank. As such, a condition

is recommended that requires the prior approval of proposals for foul sewage disposal, and that this should include pre-treatment measures to prevent the release of pollutants.

7. Planning Balance and Conclusion

- 7.1 The proposed development is located within the open countryside and North Wessex Downs AONB, where new development is strictly controlled and restricted. Only appropriate limited development is allowed that will address identified needs and maintain a strong rural economy. The proposed development will introduce new employment opportunities which will aid the rural economy in West Berkshire. Whilst the accessibility of the site by sustainable modes of transport is poor, the modest scale of the proposals are considered, on balance, to be in accordance with the development plan policies, and will provide additional employment opportunities within the local rural economy.
- 7.2 The design is low key and appropriate for the proposed use. The proposed development will not be readily visible from the public realm and will replace the existing polytunnels which do not make a positive contribution to the site in terms of appearance. Overall, the development is considered to have a neutral effect in terms of the conservation of the surrounding AONB.
- 7.3 Storage and distribution uses (B8) of this scale and light industrial uses within Class E are unlikely to have a materially adverse effect on neighbouring living conditions. The proposed uses are considered compatible with existing surrounding uses subject to conditions.
- 7.4 It is therefore recommended that planning permission is granted, subject to the proposed set of conditions.

8. Full Recommendation

- 8.1 To delegate to the Head of Development and Planning to GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the conditions listed below.

Conditions

1. **Commencement of development**

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. **Approved plans**

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents listed below:

- Proposed Elevations, reference RAC/8816/4, received 14/07/2020;
- Proposed Site Plan, reference RAC/8816/3 Rev2, received 11/09/2020.

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

3. **Construction method statement (prior approval)**

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

- (a) The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- (b) Loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- (c) Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- (d) Erection and maintenance of security hoarding including any decorative displays and/or facilities for public viewing;
- (e) Wheel washing facilities;
- (f) Measures to control dust, dirt, noise, vibrations, odours, surface water run-off, and pests/vermin during construction;
- (g) A scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works;

Thereafter the demolition and construction works shall incorporate and be undertaken in accordance with the approved statement.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of adjoining land uses and occupiers, and in the interests of highway safety. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS13 and CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026, and Policies OVS.5, OVS.6 and TRANS.1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007). A pre-commencement condition is required because the CMS must be adhered to during all demolition and construction operations.

4. **Spoil (prior approval)**

No development shall take place until details of how all spoil arising from the development will be used and/or disposed have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall:

- Show where any spoil to remain on the site will be deposited;
- Show the resultant ground levels for spoil deposited on the site (compared to existing ground levels);
- Include measures to remove all spoil from the site (that is not to be deposited);
- Include timescales for the depositing/removal of spoil.

All spoil arising from the development shall be used and/or disposed of in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure appropriate disposal of spoil from the development and to ensure that ground levels are not raised in order to protect the character and amenity of the area. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026. A pre-commencement condition is required because spoil may arise throughout development.

5. **Foul sewage**

No development shall take place until details of how foul sewage is to be disposed of have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include pre-treatment measures (e.g. oil interceptors) to prevent the release of pollutants. Thereafter no unit shall be first occupied until the foul sewage disposal measures have been provided in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure appropriate disposal of foul sewage, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policy CS5 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026. A pre-commencement condition is required because insufficient

information accompanies the application and such measures may need to be incorporated into early building operations.

6. **Hours of work (construction/demolition)**

No demolition or construction works shall take place outside the following hours, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

7:30am to 6:00pm Mondays to Fridays;

8:30am to 1:00pm Saturdays;

No work shall be carried out at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

7. **Schedule of materials**

The construction of the building hereby permitted shall not take place until a schedule of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Samples of materials shall be made available upon request. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the external materials respond to local character. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), and Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006).

8. **BREEAM**

The building hereby permitted shall achieve an "Excellent" rating under BREEAM (or any such equivalent national measure of sustainable building which replaces that scheme). The building shall not be occupied until a final Certificate has been issued certifying that BREEAM (or any such equivalent national measure of sustainable building which replaces that scheme) rating of "Excellent" has been achieved for the development, has been issued and a copy has been provided to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the development contributes to sustainable construction. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS15 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006).

9. **Site access**

No unit shall be first occupied until the site access road to the site from Hungerford Lane has been completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: The timely completion of the site accesses is necessary to ensure safe and suitable access for all. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

10. **Parking and turning**

No unit shall be first occupied until the vehicle parking and turning spaces have been completed in accordance with the approved plans (including any surfacing arrangements and marking out). Thereafter the parking and turning spaces shall be kept available for parking and manoeuvring at all times.

Reason: To ensure the development is provided with adequate parking facilities, in order to reduce the likelihood of roadside parking that would adversely affect road safety and the flow of traffic. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026, and Policy TRANS.1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1992-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

11. Cycle parking/storage

No unit shall be first occupied until the cycle parking/storage facilities have been provided in accordance with the approved drawings. Thereafter the facilities shall be maintained and kept available for that purpose at all times.

Reason: To ensure the provision of cycle parking/storage facilities in order to encourage the use of cycles and reduce reliance on private motor vehicles. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026, Policy TRANS.1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1992-2006 (Saved Policies 2007), Quality Design SPD, and the Council's Cycle and Motorcycle Advice and Standards for New Development (November 2014).

12. Electric vehicle charging points

No unit shall be first occupied until electric vehicle charging points have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. Thereafter, the charging points shall be maintained, and kept available and operational for electric vehicles at all times.

Reason: To secure the provision of charging points to encourage the use of electric vehicles. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026, and Policy TRANS.1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1992-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

13. Hard landscaping (prior approval)

No unit hereby permitted shall be occupied until the hard landscaping of the site has been completed in accordance with a hard landscaping scheme that has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The hard landscaping scheme shall include details of any boundary treatments (e.g. walls, fences) and hard surfaced areas (e.g. driveways, paths, patios, decking) to be provided as part of the development.

Reason: A comprehensive hard landscaping scheme is an essential element in the detailed design of the development, and is therefore necessary to ensure the development achieves a high standard of design. These details must be approved before the dwellings are occupied because insufficient information has been submitted with the application, and it is necessary to ensure that the scheme is of a high standard. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), and Quality Design SPD.

14. Soft landscaping (prior approval)

No unit shall be occupied until a detailed soft landscaping scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The soft landscaping scheme shall include detailed plans, planting and retention schedule, programme of works, and any other supporting information. All soft landscaping works shall be completed in accordance with the approved soft landscaping scheme within the first planting season following completion of building operations / first occupation of any new unit (whichever occurs first). Any trees, shrubs, plants or

hedges planted in accordance with the approved scheme which are removed, die, or become diseased or become seriously damaged within five years of completion of this completion of the approved soft landscaping scheme shall be replaced within the next planting season by trees, shrubs or hedges of a similar size and species to that originally approved.

Reason: A comprehensive soft landscaping scheme is an essential element in the detailed design of the development, and is therefore necessary to ensure the development achieves a high standard of design. These details must be approved before the dwellings are occupied because insufficient information has been submitted with the application, and it is necessary to ensure that the scheme is of a high standard. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS14, CS17, CS18 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), and Quality Design SPD.

15. Lighting strategy (prior approval)

No external lighting shall be installed within the application site until a lighting strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall include a plan to show the location of any lighting, and specifications all lighting to ensure that levels are designed within the limitations of Environmental Lighting Zone 1, as described by the Institute of Lighting Engineers. No external lighting shall be installed within the application site except in accordance with the above strategy.

Reason: To conserve the dark night skies of the North Wessex Downs AONB. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2019-24, and Policies CS17 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

16. No extractor units, ducts, plant

Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking, re-enacting or modifying that Order with or without modification), no extractor units, ducts or other mechanical plant shall be fixed to the external faces of the building without planning permission being granted by the Local Planning Authority on an application made for that purpose.

Reason: In the interest of local amenity. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Policies OVS5 and OVS6 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

17. Permitted uses

The units hereby permitted shall be used for storage or distribution purposes (Use Class B8) and/or for any light industrial process within Use Class E (being a use which can be carried out in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit). The units shall not be used for any other purpose, including any other purpose in Use Class E of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) (or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification). This restriction shall apply notwithstanding any provisions in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

Reason: Any other use may not be acceptable on the site, having regard to surrounding uses and its rural location. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies ADPP1, ADPP5, CS9, CS10, CS11, CS13 and CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), and Policies OVS.5, OVS.6 and TRANS.1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

18. Customer opening hours

The premises hereby permitted shall not be open to customers outside of the following hours:

Mondays to Fridays: 08:30 to 18:00

Saturdays: 09:00 to 13:00

Sundays and public holidays: closed

Reason: To safeguard the living conditions of surrounding occupiers. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Policy OVS.6 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

19. Operating hours (machinery/processes)

No machinery shall be operated, and no industrial processes shall take place, outside of the following hours:

Mondays to Fridays: 08:30 to 17:00

Saturdays: 09:00 to 13:00

Sundays and public holidays: no operating

9am – 4pm Mondays to Fridays;

10am -12pm Saturdays;

nor at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard the living conditions of surrounding occupiers. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Policy OVS.6 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

20. Delivery hours

No deliveries shall be taken at or despatched from the site outside the following hours:

Mondays to Fridays: 08:30 to 18:00

Saturdays: 09:00 to 13:00

Sundays and public holidays: no deliveries

Reason: To safeguard the living conditions of surrounding occupiers. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Policy OVS.6 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

21. No industrial processes outside

No industrial processes [as defined by The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended)] shall take place outside of the building hereby permitted.

Reason: To safeguard the living conditions of surrounding occupiers. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Policy OVS.6 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

22. **No external storage**
No materials, goods, plant, machinery, products, equipment, vehicles, storage containers or waste containers shall be stored, processed, repaired, operated or displayed in the open land on the site.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

Informatives

1. **Statement under Article 35(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015**
Revision and Representations
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. **Damage to footways, cycleways and verges**
The attention of the applicant is drawn to the Berkshire Act, 1986, Part II, Clause 9, which enables the Highway Authority to recover the costs of repairing damage to the footway, cycleway or grass verge, arising during building operations.
3. **Damage to the carriageway**
The attention of the applicant is drawn to the Highways Act, 1980, which enables the Highway Authority to recover expenses due to extraordinary traffic.
4. **Industrial processes**
For clarity on the permitted uses defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), any industrial process permitted under Class E must be a use which can be carried out in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit. An "industrial process" as a process for or incidental to any of the following purposes:—
 - (a) the making of any article or part of any article (including a ship or vessel, or a film, video or sound recording);
 - (b) the altering, repairing, maintaining, ornamenting, finishing, cleaning, washing, packing, canning, adapting for sale, breaking up or demolition of any article; or
 - (c) the getting, dressing or treatment of minerals;in the course of any trade or business other than agriculture, and other than a use carried out in or adjacent to a mine or quarry.



Site access

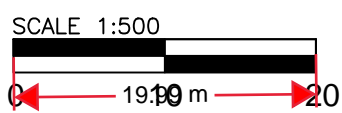
Glenvale Nurseries

Swallows Rest

Existing buildings to be demolished

woods

Bracken House



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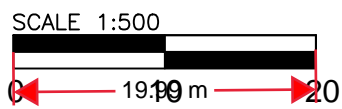
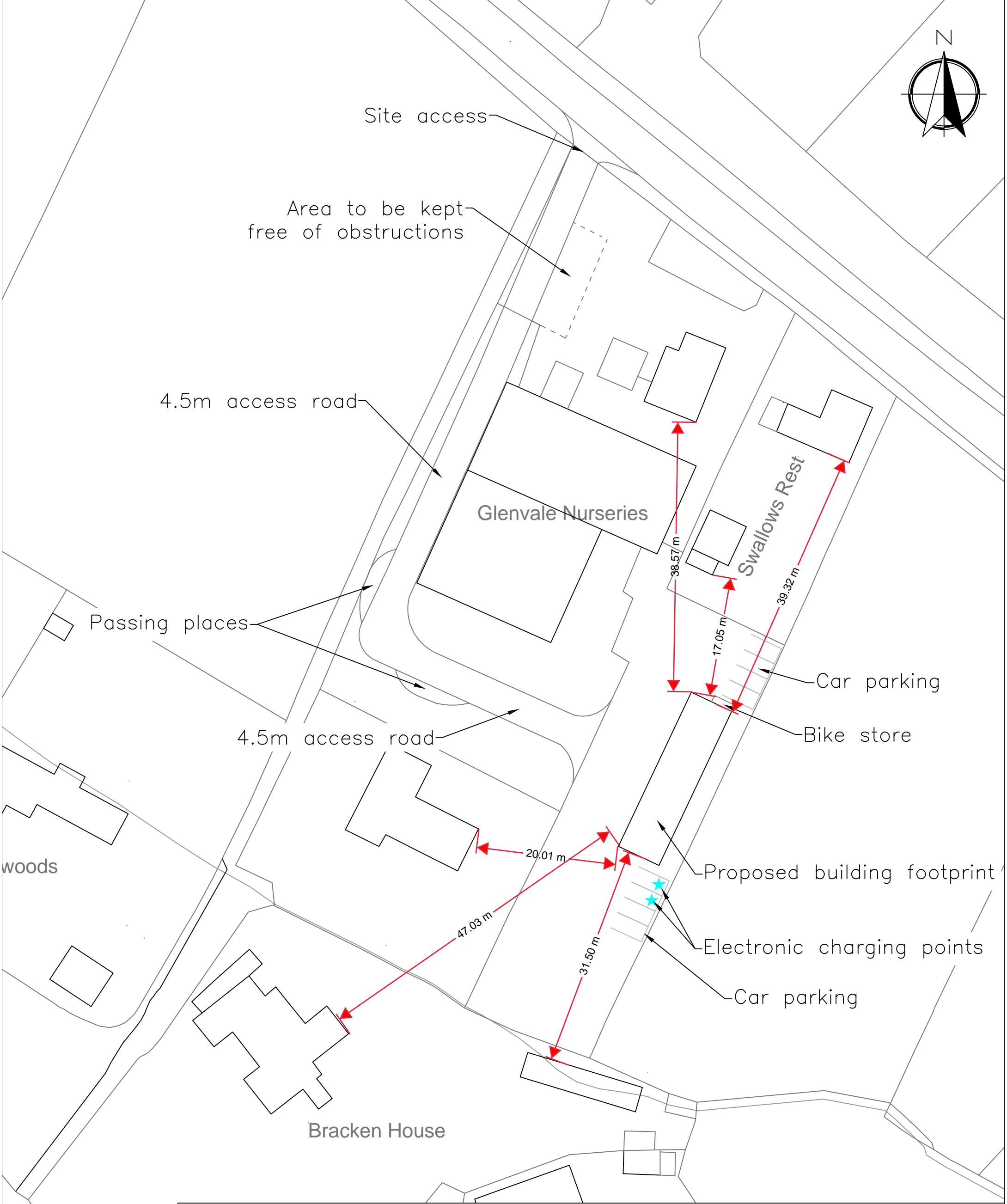
Drawing title Existing Site Plan	Ref. RAC/8816/2	Rev.			
Contract Glenvale Nurseries, Hungerford Lane, Bradfield, Reading, RG7 6JH	Drawn by AGM	Checked by SB			
	Scales 1:500@A3	Date 06/2020	Rev.	Comment	Date

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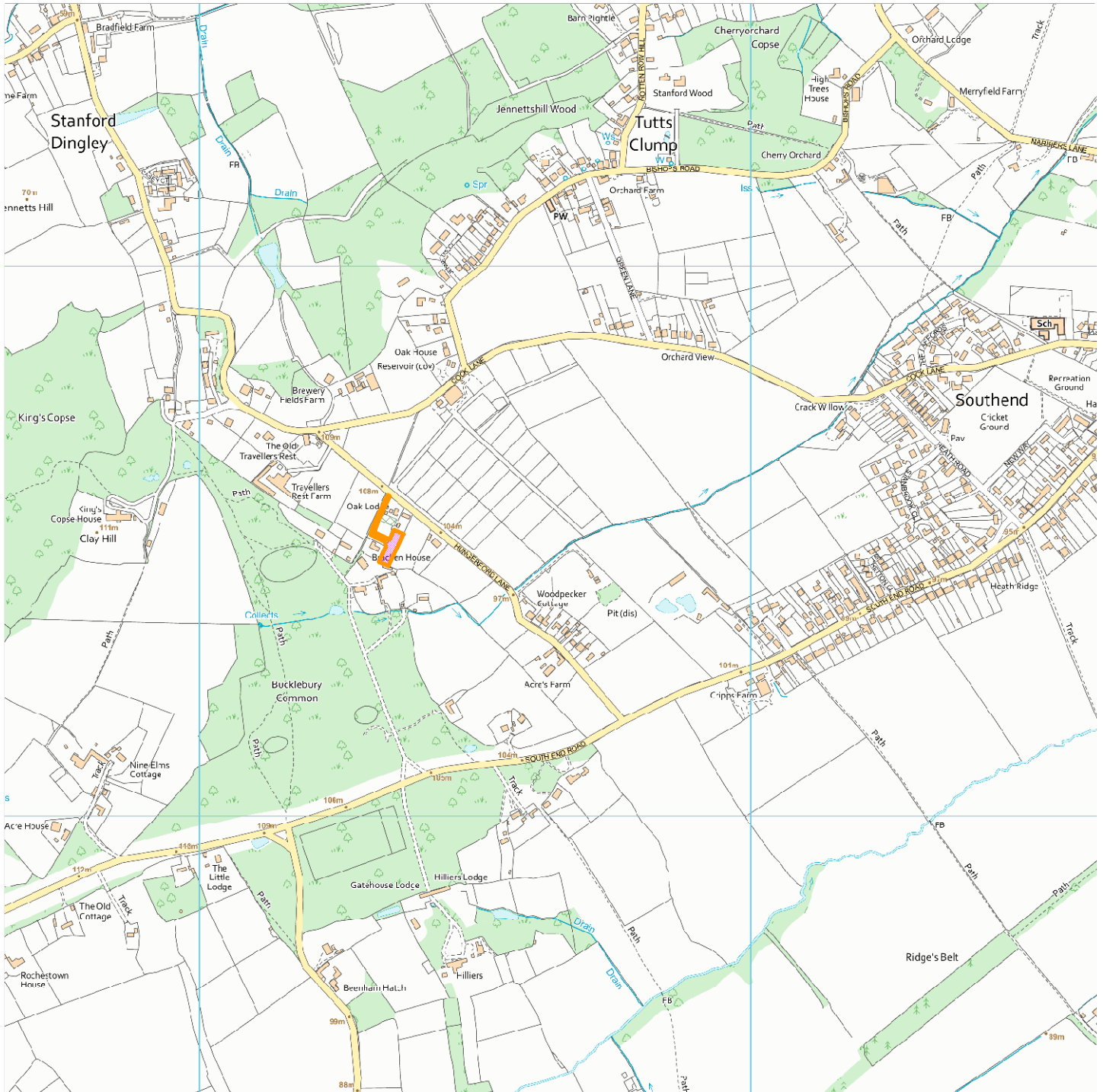
Drawing title Proposed Site Plan	Ref. RAC/8816/3	Rev. REV2			
Contract Glenvale Nurseries, Hungerford Lane, Bradfield, Reading, RG7 6JH	Drawn by AGM	Checked by SB	REV2	Proposed development updates	09/2020
	Scales 1:500@A3	Date 09/2020	REV1	Passing places	08/2020
			Rev.	Comment	Date

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Glenvale Nurseries Hungerford Lane Bradfield Southend



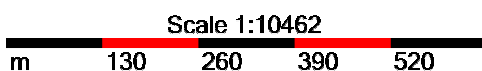
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Scale : 1:10462

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Organisation	West Berkshire Council
Department	
Comments	Not Set
Date	20 October 2020
SLA Number	0100024151



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Glenvale Nursery, Hungerford Road, Bradfield Southend

Photographs for Eastern Area Planning Committee

Application 20/01480/FUL



Screening along Hungerford Road



Dwellings Oak Lodge and Swallows Rest

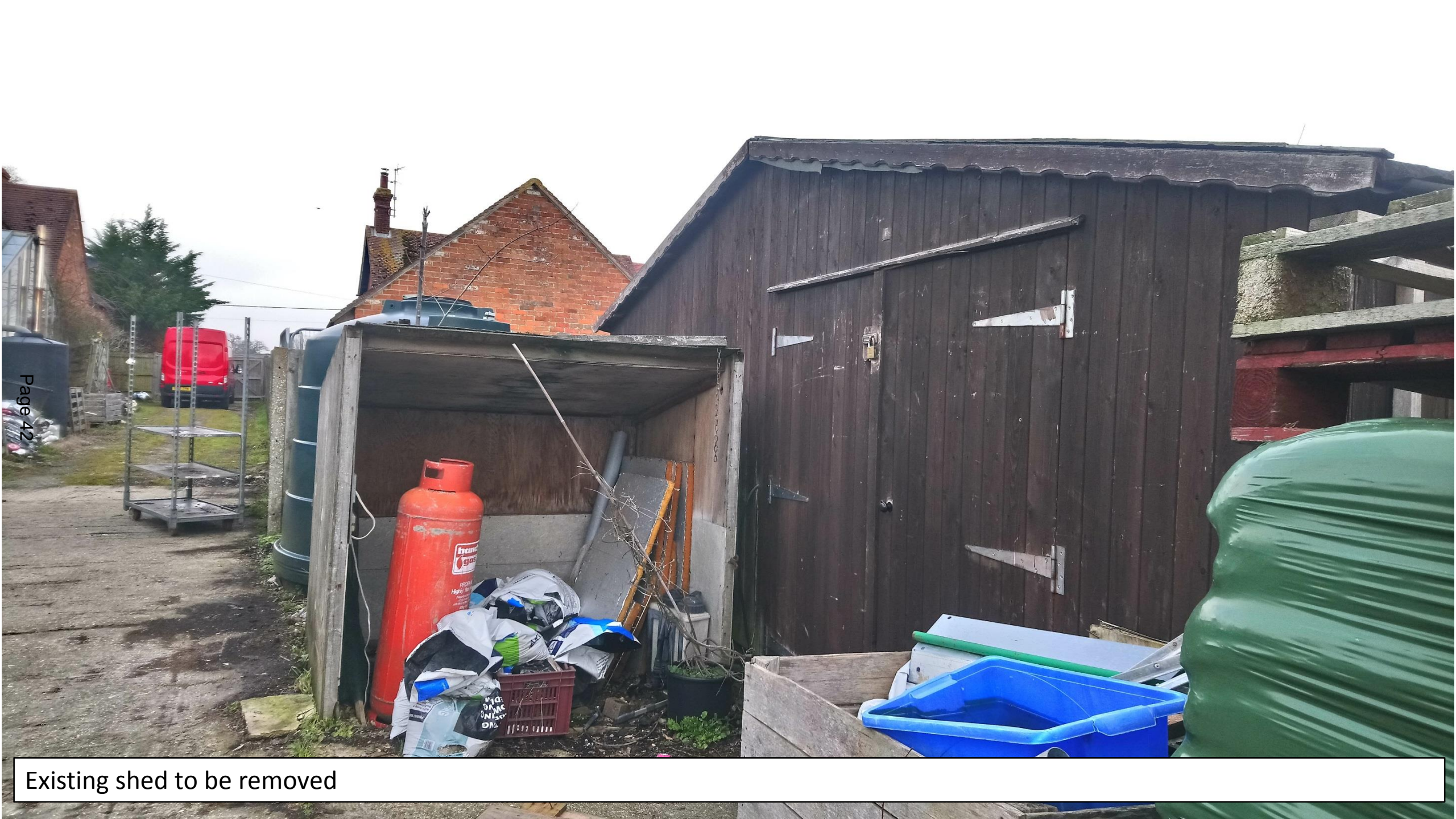


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Current access into site, to be retained



Nursey and neighbouring dwelling, Birdcage Cottage



Existing shed to be removed



Existing polytunnels to removed



Existing polytunnels to removed



Looking from the proposal site into Glenvale Nursery



Proposed vehicular track South facing



Proposed vehicular track North facing



North facing within the site



South facing within the site



South facing within the site

Agenda Item 4.(2)

Item No.	Application No. and Parish	Statutory Target Date	Proposal, Location, Applicant
(2)	20/00674/FUL Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council	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 30 October 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: Delegated to the Head of Development and Planning 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

Name: Lydia Mather
Job Title: Senior Planning Officer
Tel No: 01635 519111
Email: Lydia.Mather@westberks.gov.uk

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This application seeks planning permission for the change of use of land and the 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 east of the site where it would be on the boundary with the remainder of the agricultural field. The planting is now shown within an amended red line.
- 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 the 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 Since the application was deferred at the Eastern Area Planning Committee meeting on 5th August 2020 the applicant was advised of the matters the Committee considered needed to be addressed. These were:

- additional information to justify the proposed 150 car parking spaces;
- amended location plan to capture the proposed landscaping;
- details on lighting;
- additional information on the previous Inspector’s conclusion that additional traffic outweighs the benefit of increased use;
- additional information to address the declaration of a climate emergency since the neighbourhood development plan was adopted and the forecast shift from commuting to working from home arising from COVID;
- and clarification on the area where existing trees haven’t been surveyed.

3.2 The applicant responded with: a response statement; a car parking technical note; the GWR design guide and GWR electrical specification. These are addressed in the appraisal at section 6 below.

- 3.3 **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.
- 3.4 **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.
- 3.5 **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. Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council are the applicant.

WBC Highways:	Objection to the proposed footway over the bridge on Station Road and the number of car parking spaces proposed.
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:	Support need for additional parking, but concerned with the level proposed.
Local Lead Flood Authority:	No objection subject to condition following receipt of amended plans.

Public representations

4.2 Representations have been received from 31 contributors, 8 of whom object to the proposal, and 22 who support. 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 by objectors:

- 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.

The following issues/points have been raised by supporters:

- Benefit to the whole community, many local residents would not need to use their own car but use public transport;
- It would prevent on street parking which is sometimes unsafe;
- The proposal would not be intrusive;
- The proposal is welcomed by many village residents following partnership working by the parish council;
- It would save residents travelling to Reading or Theale as there is no parking at Mortimer after 7.30am;
- Cars also parked on Mortimer Hill and on the verge towards Wokefield due to lack of station parking demonstrating ample need for additional space;
- It would save residents driving to drop off family members due to lack of parking;

- The existing car park was not designed for the commuter traffic which exists now;
- Driving to other train stations adds to congestion along narrow roads;
- The proposal is an improvement for disabled persons to access the Basingstoke platform;
- It would reduce overall harmful environmental car emissions;
- Many elderly people struggle to use the existing stepped footbridge over the railway line which limits their access;
- Bicycles also have to be carried over the stepped footbridge.

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, CS18, 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
- Heritage
- 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:
- a) 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);
 - b) 119 respondents did not travel by train due to the lack of car parking at Mortimer station (paragraph 4.12);
 - c) 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;
 - d) 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 The submission includes supporting information from Great Western Railway. They consider the lack of parking to be suppressing growth in rail use at the station. They state the Office and Rail and Road published estimates of station usage shows an increase of 3% to and from Mortimer between 2004/5 and 2018/19, compared to a 95% increase across the industry. They note the increase in passenger numbers following car park expansion at Hanborough, Kingham and Kemble.

	Car parking spaces			Passenger numbers	
	2004/5	2018/19	With expansion	2004/5	2018/19
Hanborough	39	278		75,976	231,986
Kingham	123	248		124,462	183,514
Kemble	220	553		223,066	372,686
Mortimer	51	51	201	182,741	189,316

- 6.18 The recent submission of the technical note on car parking demand reviews the previously submitted car parking survey undertaken in July 2017 and the questionnaire. It outlines that rail users will drive to an alternative station or not use the train if they are not confident there is sufficient parking. With regard to the 2017 car parking survey they note between 09:30 and 16:30 the car park was almost at capacity with only 3 or 4 spaces available. There were circa 20 cars parked on The Street between 09:00 and 17:00 on the same day.
- 6.19 With regard to the 2018 questionnaire which covered a third of the area considered to be the catchment the applicant's technical note considers that the same number in each of the other third of catchment would not use the station because it lacked parking. So the response of 80 people would be a total of 240 people for the whole catchment.
- 6.20 Based on the 85 people in the questionnaire who said they use the station on a daily basis and the 53 car parking spaces available they arrive at a ratio of 0.62 (53/85) and project that 169 spaces are required based on 240 people who would use the station if it had parking and multiplying that by the factor of 0.62. Adding the 9% shift of the approved travel plan for the allocated housing site in Mortimer takes the total to 179 spaces. This would be an additional 126 car parking spaces and the technical note considers that this provides sufficient evidence for the proposed 150 car park.
- 6.21 Highways have been asked to comment on the technical note and the letter responding to the request for additional information following the deferral at Committee. They dispute that of the catchment of the submitted questionnaire 80 people would use the station if there were more parking. They consider that figure to be 47 people.

- 6.22 Nor do Highways agree that each third of the catchment would generate an equal number of people who would use the train more. They consider that those further away from the station will gravitate to other stations closer to them, citing Sulhamstead towards Aldermaston and Theale and Silchester towards Bramley. The car park being built at Green Park Station will also be 6.5km away and which will affect travel patterns of those in Burghfield and Grazeley.
- 6.23 Highways also dispute the additional 10 vehicles to park at the station from the new development in Mortimer on the basis is assume the travel plan target of 9% shift away from the car will be met and that those using the station will travel to it by car.
- 6.24 On the GWR point that it is lack of parking that is suppressing rail passenger demand Highways note that many stations on the Reading to Bedwyn line through Newbury and Thatcham saw significant falls in passenger journeys over the last five years and question if that is to be accounted for due to lack of parking at stations.
- 6.25 Highways have therefore undertaken their own car parking projection from census 2011 Travel to Work data on the following basis (SoCI: Statement of Community Involvement):
- Three census districts that form the catchment around the train station.
 - The population employed within each district.
 - The percentage of the census district that is considered within the station catchment.
 - Taking account of Green Park station.
 - The 2011 census data for West Berkshire revealed that some 5% travelled to work by train. Unfortunately it has not been possible to obtain this data for each of the three census districts, so this figure is applied.
 - From the SoCI, some 67% of respondents travelled every day.
 - Assume additional journeys for non-employment uses such as leisure, shopping etc. These generally will not occur so regularly as employment.
 - From the SoCI, 55% of respondents from Mortimer travelled to the station solely in a car that was parked. A higher level of 75% is assumed for Burghfield and Swallowfield due to greater distances from the station.

Census district	Burghfield E36000846	Mortimer E36000858	Swallowfield E36000945
population in employment	3068	2692	1485
% district in catchment	70%	60%	50%
	2148	1615	743
5% travel by train	107	81	37
67% travel daily	72	54	25
plus 20% non - employment	86	65	30
travel to station in car alone	75%	55%	75%
	65	36	22
Total car parking required	123		
Plus 5% population growth since 2011	129 car parking spaces		

- 6.26 The projected maximum totals 129 spaces, minus the existing 53 spaces, would be an additional 76 spaces. This is half of the proposed additional 150 car parking spaces. As with any projection it includes assumptions and is based on the information available – that submitted by the applicant and census data. It is considered a more robust projection than the applicant’s submitted car parking technical note.
- 6.27 Transport Policy have now commented on the application. They support a moderate increase in car parking appropriate to serve Mortimer and the surrounding area. They also have concerns on the level of parking proposed which makes it difficult for some of the reasons for refusal in the previous application to be overcome, and that there is an absence of robust forecasts and evidence from GWR. They do not consider any information presented demonstrates justification of the level of parking proposed.
- 6.28 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

- 6.29 Core Strategy Policies ADPP1, CS14 and CS19 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.
- 6.30 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.”

- 6.31 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”.

- 6.32 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.

- 6.33 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.

- 6.34 The applicant's landscape consultant notes that, as a planning consideration, 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.

- 6.35 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.

- 6.36 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.

- 6.37 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.
- 6.38 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.
- 6.39 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. The full area of planting is now shown within the red line.
- 6.40 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.
- 6.41 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.
- 6.42 The recently submitted GWR design guide also includes section 7.2 on fencing with security fencing to be considered for all car parks and of a minimum 1.8m in height with the choices shown all being metal railing fencing.
- 6.43 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. Overall therefore it is considered that the Council's landscape consultant's conclusion is accepted that the proposal is contrary to policies CS14, CS19 and the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Heritage

- 6.44 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.

- 6.45 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.
- 6.46 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.

Quality of life

- 6.47 Policy 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.
- 6.48 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.
- 6.49 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.
- 6.50 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.
- 6.51 The Committee requested additional information on lighting. A lighting plan has not been submitted by the applicant who maintains this is a matter that can be secured by condition. But documents of GWR on their design guide and electrical specification have been submitted and that CCTV would be included and some limited signage necessary (which is covered by Advertisement Regulations).
- 6.52 The submitted electrical specification at 6.7.2 on lighting states that their approved suspended, surface mounted and recessed luminaires shall be installed on desks, control panels, screens and mimic panels to meet CIBSE recommendations with dimming controls fitted. At 6.9.2 on open areas lighting is to meet RIS 7702 requirements to secured car parks standard on column mounts.

6.53 The GWR design guide states that CCTV must be considered at all car park entrances and exits, with coverage that should also track people through an area and to monitor vehicle movements. At section 11.1 on lighting which states consideration always to be given to LED, including at locations with high risk of vandalism or low height installations, and shrouding considered next to residential areas. Pole heights should not exceed 8m high for car parks with galvanised columns. External lighting must be photocell controlled at a minimum.

6.54 In addition GWR car parks are to meet the park mark standard. From that website:

Safety

Park Mark car parks have lower crime as operators do all they can to reduce both crime and the fear of crime. During the accreditation process, police assessors recommend changes that are known to deter offenders, such as perimeter fencing, surveillance and bright lighting. If incidents do occur, operators and assessors together identify the causes and take action.

Lighting levels

Pedestrians want to see and be seen as they walk to and from their car. People can fear dark areas. Park Mark recognises that increased lighting levels in dark areas can reduce the fear of crime and opportunities to commit offences. Maximum use is made of daylight supplemented by artificial illumination

6.55 From the additional information submitted it is reasonable to assume that a 1.8m perimeter safety fencing would be sought, CCTV at the vehicle entry/exit and within the car park and over the ramped and stepped access to the platform. The lighting within the car park likely to be sought would be columns of up to 8m. Whilst lighting is likely to include shrouds to direct light downwards all of these features can be urbanising in their impact and tall lighting columns difficult to mitigate with boundary landscaping. The recently submitted letter in response to the matters raised by Committee states that the hedging along Station Road being allowed to grow to 3.5 metres high and the proposed new landscaping screen would make the car park virtually invisible from the road. The hedge is likely to be lower than the lighting columns and the lighting is likely to be visible from the road at night and on dull days.

Biodiversity

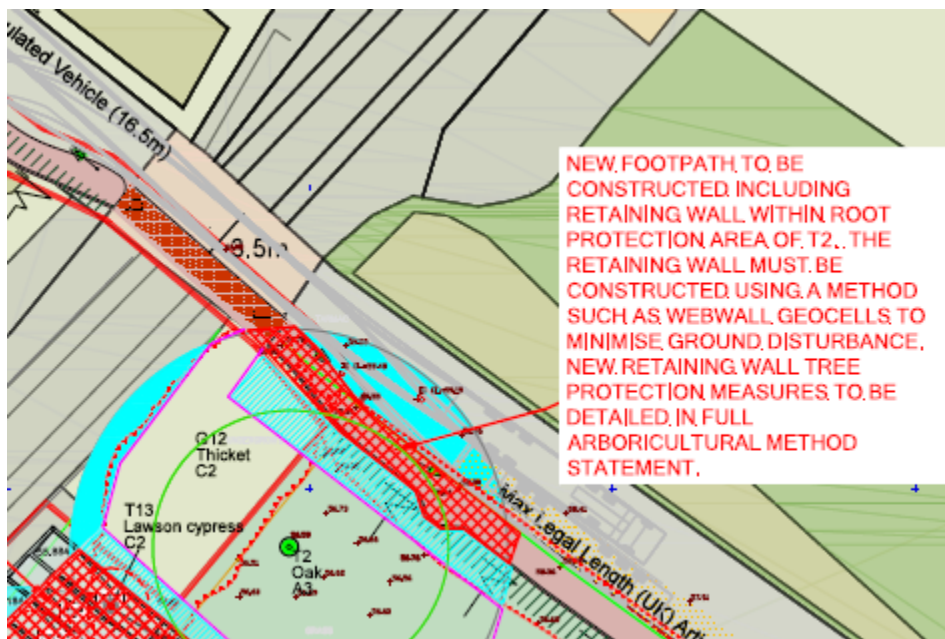
6.56 Policy CS17 requires biodiversity to be conserved and enhanced and the B2 and B3 policies on biodiversity in the Stratfield Mortimer Development Plan also apply. An extended phase 1 ecological assessment has been submitted and reviewed by the Council's Ecologist.

6.57 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 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.

6.58 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

- 6.59 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.
- 6.60 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.
- 6.61 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:



- 6.62 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.
- 6.63 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.

- 6.64 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. The applicant has confirmed acceptance of such a condition.

Flooding and Drainage

- 6.65 The site 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.
- 6.66 The Local Lead Flood Authority has 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.
- 6.67 Amended surface water drainage strategy plans were submitted along with calculations. The swales provide green water quality benefits and have a suitable outfall discharging to the pond. The scrape pond is now shown to overflow to the attenuation.
- 6.68 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 and is shown on the amended plan. The ditch runs across what is shown as the access to the site. It is now shown as being diverted under the road which will require a separate ordinary watercourse consent.
- 6.69 The amended drainage strategy is now considered to comply with policy CS16 and the Sustainable Drainage SPD and can be conditioned including for the maintenance to be undertaken.

Highways

- 6.70 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.
- 6.71 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, and the proposed footway along Station Road. The need for a car park of the size proposed has been covered in the section on the principle of development.
- 6.72 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 in Manual for Streets 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.

- 6.73 The applicant considers that whilst ideally a footway should have a 5% or 1:20 gradient, that one of 8% or 1:12 may be used. They state that the submitted drawing shows that the average on the south eastern side of the bridge slope is 5% and that to the north western side averages 8%. Furthermore, the distance of this gradient the applicant considers short and is in line with both Manual for Streets and Inclusive Mobility Guidelines.
- 6.74 Transport Policy have commented that they do not consider the proposal to result in the station being seen as any more accessible than it currently is; that it would remain a station that is not fully accessible. The Council has promoted the station for consideration for Access for All funding to improve its accessibility but as yet it has not featured highly in Network Rail's list of priorities. They note that cycle parking and a considerable number of electric vehicle charging points should be provided alongside any increase in car parking.

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 and it is not considered to provide sufficient safety for pedestrians and disabled users. As such the benefit cannot be fully 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 lighting is likely to be visible. This weighs significantly against the proposal.
- 7.4 There is a minor adverse impact on the amenity of the residents of Station Road from the access and lighting.
- 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 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, Manual for Streets, the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan 2017, 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**

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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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MORTIMER RAILWAY STATION CAR PARK

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT | DECEMBER 2019

Prepared by Pro Vision on behalf of Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council



MORTIMER RAILWAY STATION CAR PARK
STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
PROJECT NO. 2233

PREPARED BY:

KATHERINE MILES BA (HONS), MSC, MRTPI
PLANNING DIRECTOR

CHECKED BY:

NAME, QUALIFICATIONS
JOB TITLE

DATE:

DECEMBER 2019

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Appendices

Appendix A: Consultation responses in full
(anonymised)

1. INTRODUCTION

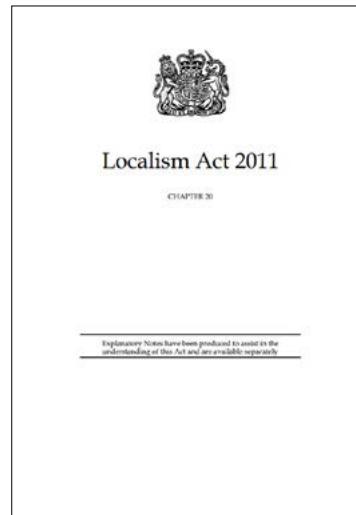
- 1.1 Pro Vision has been instructed by Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council to submit a Full Planning Application to West Berkshire Council for a 150 space car park, a drop-off/pick-up facility, landscaping, and associated works at Mortimer Station, Stratfield Mortimer.
- 1.2 The site is adjacent to the south of the existing railway station and west of Station Road, from which access is proposed.
- 1.3 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the consultation undertaken on the proposals prior to the submission of this planning application.
- 1.4 The aim of this SCI is to illustrate the methods Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council have used to involve and inform the local community of the plans and proposals, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the National Planning Policy Framework, and West Berkshire Council's Revised Statement of Community Involvement 2014.
- 1.5 Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council play a key role in village life and are committed to involving all residents and other members of the local community before and during the development process. Feedback on the proposals was encouraged at a community consultation event held on 26 February 2019.
- 1.6 The development team have considered comments raised through consultation and the proposals have been amended in response to these comments.
- 1.7 This document gives an overview and summarises the findings of the consultation phase undertaken before the planning application was submitted.



2. POLICY CONTEXT

THE LOCALISM ACT 2011

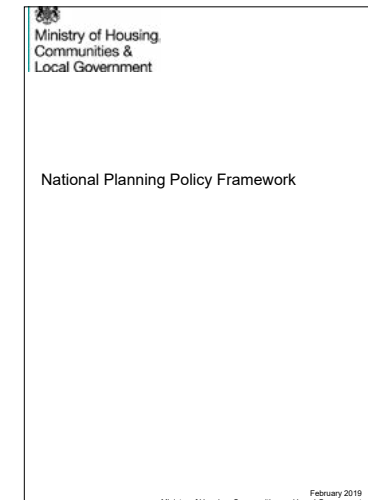
- 2.1 The Localism Act received Royal Assent in November 2011 and makes pre-application consultation a statutory obligation for certain developments. It requires developers to inform nearby residents and businesses of their proposals, allowing local people a chance to comment at a stage when amending the proposals is still practical.
- 2.2 The Parish Council has opted to carry out community consultation prior to application submission, in line with the aims of the Act.
- 2.3 The Act requires developers to:
- Consult communities before submitting applications, having regard to any advice that their local planning authority may provide;
 - Consider any responses received before the proposals are finalised and the application submitted; and
 - When submitting the application account for how they have consulted the local community, what comments have been received, and how those comments have been taken into account, or not.



NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) 2019

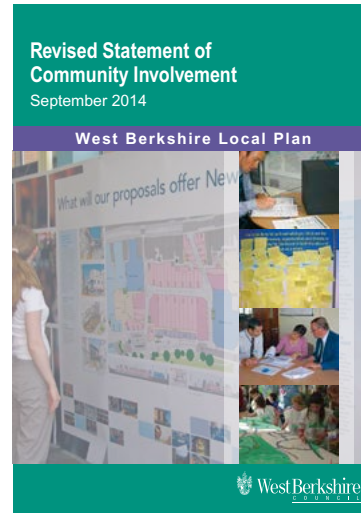
- 2.4 The NPPF identifies the role of Local Authorities in encouraging good quality pre-application consultation by applicants and developers.
- 2.5 Paragraph 39 recognises that “early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties”.

- 2.6 Paragraph 40 states that Local Authorities should “encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community and, where relevant, with statutory and non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications”, where this would be beneficial.
- 2.7 Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that “applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot”.



WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL'S REVISED STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT 2014

- 2.8 The Council formally adopted a Statement of Community Involvement in September 2014. The SCI was subsequently amended in January 2015. The Council's SCI applies to both the preparation of local planning policy documents and to planning applications. It sets out how everyone in the District "has the opportunity to contribute and have their views heard".
- 2.9 The remainder of this SCI focuses on the consultation undertaken, the feedback received, and how this feedback has informed the proposals.



3. PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT

- 3.1 Prior to undertaking consultation with members of the public, West Berkshire Council were approached by Pro Vision, Great Western Railways and Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council for pre-application advice in March 2017.
- 3.2 In response to the pre-application submission, the Council provided written advice in April 2017 which subsequently provided the basis for discussion at a meeting with Pro Vision at the Council Offices in Newbury in October 2017.
- 3.3 The Council's response raised three primary considerations relevant to the development: the need for additional parking, accessibility to disabled passengers, and landscape impacts.
- 3.4 The Council's written response considered that the proposal did not include adequate provision for a disabled passenger to cross between platforms and access carparks adjacent to each. Specifically the Officer expressed a view that the proposal would not address the requirement for a returning passenger to cross the hump-backed bridge which would represent a highway safety issue. The Council "*accepted that there is a need for additional parking*" at the station while also stating that "*evidence would need to be provided*" with an application to substantiate the proposed capacity increase. The Officer also identified "*the presence of this area of hard standing/parked cars*" and its foreign nature within the landscape. It was felt that the visual impact would not be appropriate in the "*setting of the village here*" which was stated to be "*rural in character*".
- 3.5 Despite expressing concerns about highway safety and landscape impacts the Officer did identify the compliance of the proposal in principle with Policies ADPP6: The East Kennet Valley and CS13: Transport.
- 3.6 The Council's written advice concluded that "*while it is recognised that there is a need for additional parking, the amount of which needs to be demonstrated, this site is sensitively located within a rural landscape and visually prominent. It is considered that a car park, irrespective of its size will be visually intrusive and an alien feature within the landscape.*" The Officer advised that "*I am of the opinion that these issues are fundamental and cannot be designed out*". The applicant disagrees and has engaged a team of professional advisors to consider the concerns raised by the Council in its pre-application response. A revised scheme which responds to the concerns has been prepared, and has been the subject of consultation with the local community.



4. NEED SURVEY

Introduction

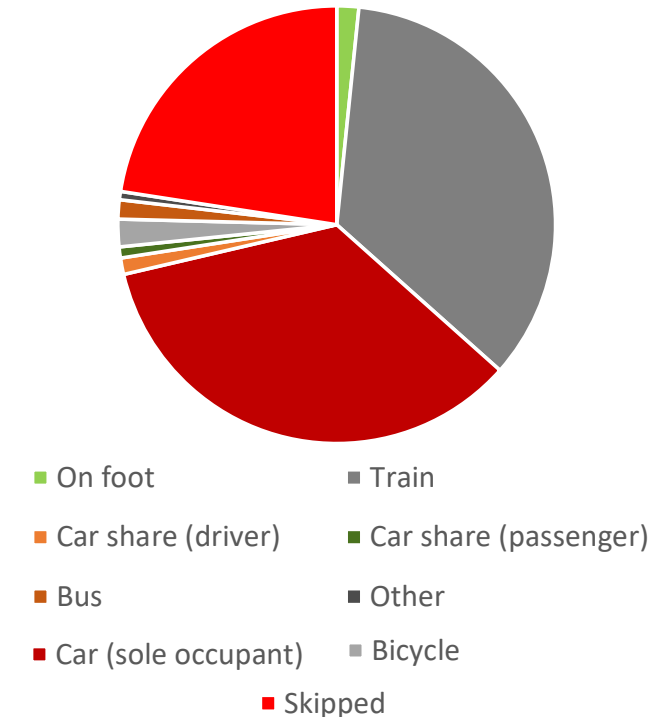
- 4.1 This report assesses a survey of the users of Mortimer Railway Station. The survey was conducted throughout June and July 2018.
- 4.2 The consultation exercise has been conducted to support Mortimer Parish Council's strategic objective to improve access and usage of Mortimer railway station and promoting sustainable travel. The aim is to improve on-site parking provision. In the letter of 26th April 2017, and in response to a pre-application proposal for a 100 space car park, the West Berkshire Council Planning Department stated, "it is accepted that there is a need for additional parking however further evidence would need to be provided with any format [of] application to demonstrate the number of spaces required".
- 4.3 The survey was prepared to ascertain the quantum of need for additional parking at Mortimer Railway Station. The survey was split into three sections addressing respondent's journeys to work, perceptions of Mortimer Railway Station, and relevant individual characteristics.
- 4.4 This report sets out the responses received and provides analysis of the data. It has been prepared to evidence the need

for a 150 space car-park, and therefore responds to the pre-application comments of the Council.

Travelling to work via Mortimer Railway Station

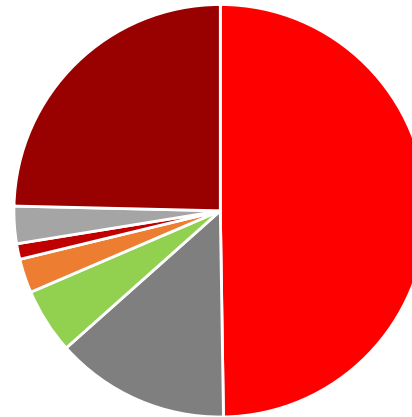
- 4.5 Section 1 of the survey addresses the commute to work of respondents. It should be noted that all respondents who travel to work were invited to participate in this section including those who do not use the station to commute.
- 4.6 The first question asked respondents about the main mode of transport taken on their journey to work. The responses are detailed below. The results show the majority of those responding to the survey travel to work by train, with the second highest proportion being those who travel to work alone in private cars. While 45.5% of respondents answering the question already travel by train (although not necessarily from Mortimer) a clear majority (54.5%) make use of other modes. The responses demonstrate that substantial scope exists to make a modal shift, reducing the number of car borne journeys to work if travelling by train from Mortimer could be made more attractive / possible.

Thinking about your regular journey to work, what is your main transport mode?	
On foot	8
Train	172
Car (sole occupant)	171
Car Share (driver)	6
Car Share (passenger)	4
Bicycle	10
Bus	7
Other	3
Skipped	111



4.7 The “main reason” for choosing the mode of transport was asked. This question invited respondents to ‘write in’ an answer of their own choice and so has produced qualitative results. “There Is No Alternative” has been used to group respondents who stated there was very little choice in how they travelled to work i.e. perhaps due to the location or nature of their place of work. The results demonstrate that convenience is the most important factor in people determining the mode of transport people in Mortimer use to travel to work.

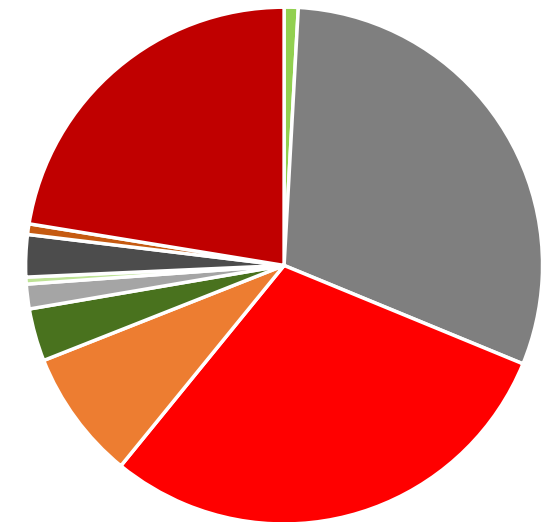
Please state the main reason for this preferred mode of transport i.e. cost, convenience etc.	
Convenience	204
Cost	56
Cost and Convenience	21
There is no alternative	11
Speed (mentioned as well as convenience)	5
Distance	12
Skipped	101



- Convenience
- Cost and convenience
- Speed (mentioned as well as convenience)
- Skipped
- Cost
- There Is No Alternative
- Distance

4.8 Travel destinations of respondents were requested. The majority of respondents travel east from Mortimer to various destinations in Reading and London. Substantial numbers of people commute to both Basingstoke and Newbury. All these locations are accessible by train from Mortimer.

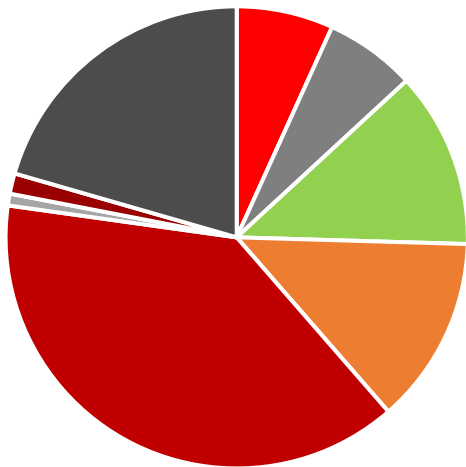
What is your usual destination?	
Winnersh	4
London (all)	138
Reading (all)	135
Basingstoke	37
Newbury	15
Bracknell	7
Oxford	2
Mortimer (destination)	12
Tilehurst	3
Skipped	102



- Winnersh
- London (all)
- Reading (all)
- Basingstoke
- Newbury
- Bracknell
- Oxford
- Mortimer (destination)
- Tilehurst
- Skipped

4.9 The number of days a week that people make their journey to work showed that the largest single group of people make their journey five days a week. In total the number of people who made their journey 4 or 5 days a week accounted for 65% of those who answered the question.

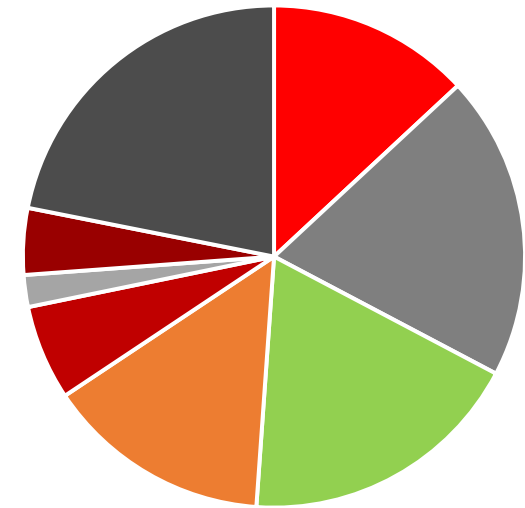
How many days a week do you make this journey?	
1	33
2	31
3	60
4	64
5	188
6	4
7	7
Skipped	100



■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■ 6 ■ 7 ■ Skipped

4.10 Question 5 enquired about the use of the station during the 'rush hour' to understand the extent of the demand pressures potentially placed upon the station over the course of an average weekday. The results show a large volume of people using the station travel early morning, with 84% of people answering the question set out before 8:30am.

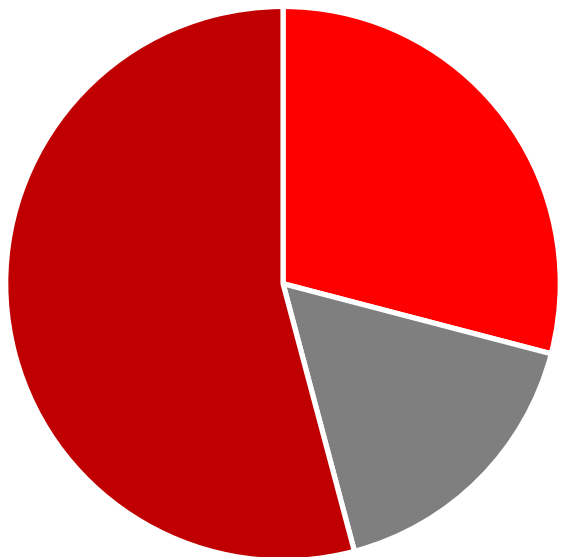
If you travel in the morning 'peak', what is your usual travel time?	
Before 7am	64
07:00–07:30	96
07:30–08:00	90
08:00–08:30	71
08:30–09:00	30
09:00–09:30	10
After 09.30	21
Skipped	107



■ Before 7am ■ 07:00–07:30 ■ 07:30–08:00 ■ 08:00–08:30
 ■ 08:30–09:00 ■ 09:00–09:30 ■ After 09:30 ■ Skipped

4.11 When asked directly if they could make their regular journey to work by train, a large proportion of respondents (almost 2:1) indicated that they could travel by train. This is significant, because it highlights the potential to achieve a modal shift towards sustainable transport modes if better facilities were available. It should be noted that this question prompts both those who do not travel to work and those who already travel by train to 'skip' the question – i.e. the question was targeted at those who do not currently use the train but could do.

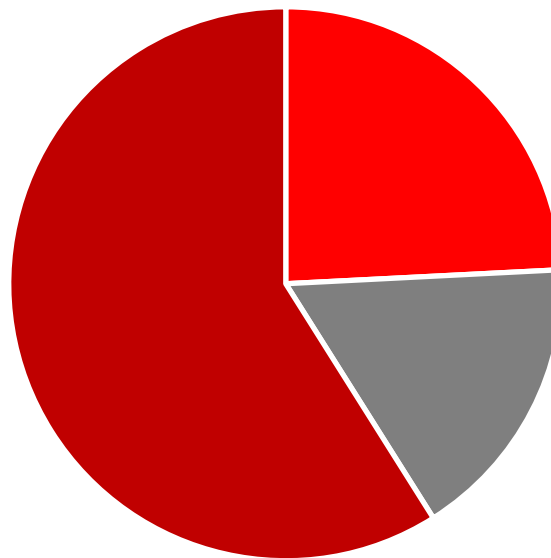
Thinking about your regular journey to work, could you make the same journey by train? (If you already travel by train, please move on to Section 2)	
Yes	137
No	79
Skipped	255



■ Yes ■ No ■ Skipped

4.12 Those who did not already travel by train were asked if that decision was influenced by lack of parking available at Mortimer Station in Question 7. The results demonstrated that for a clear majority of those deciding not to travel by train, the lack of parking available at the station was a material factor.

If you answered yes to Question 6, is your decision not to travel by train currently influenced by the lack of car parking at Mortimer Station?	
Yes	119
No	83
Skipped	290



■ Yes ■ No ■ Skipped

4.13 The most notable outcomes from this part of the survey are that:

- respondents were split almost 1:1 on travelling to work by train or by car;
- a majority of people who didn't already travel by train both could do so (137 of 209);
- a lack of parking at the station influenced the decision not to travel by train (119 of 209); and
- convenience was "the main reason" in deciding how to travel to work.

About Mortimer Railway Station

4.14 Section 2 of the survey asked respondents about Mortimer Railway Station and their use of it. The questions in this section aim to understand how respondents use Mortimer Station; attitudes towards potential access improvements; and gain an understand of how access improvements would influence the use of the station.

4.15 Question 8 asked respondents how often they used Mortimer Railway Station. The results showed that 85.5% of respondents did use the station while 44.6% of respondents used the station at least once a month.

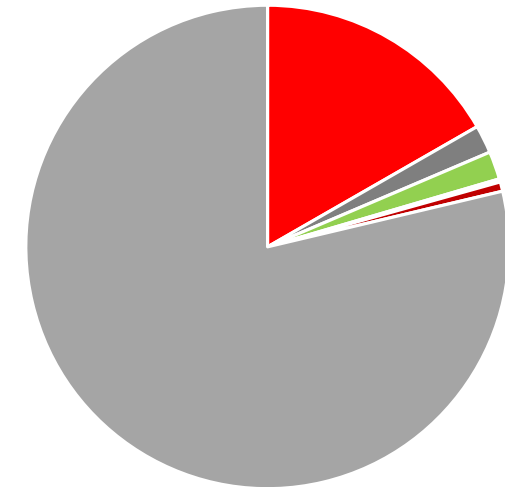
How often do you use Mortimer Railway Station?	
Daily	85
A few times a week	67
Weekly	59
Monthly	103
Less than once a month	100
Never	47
Skipped	23



■ Daily ■ A few times a week ■ Weekly ■ Monthly
 ■ Less than once a month ■ Never ■ Skipped

4.16 Those who answered “Never” to the previous question were then asked to provide a reason for doing so. The results returned show that a clear majority of those answering the question did not use the station due to a lack of parking.

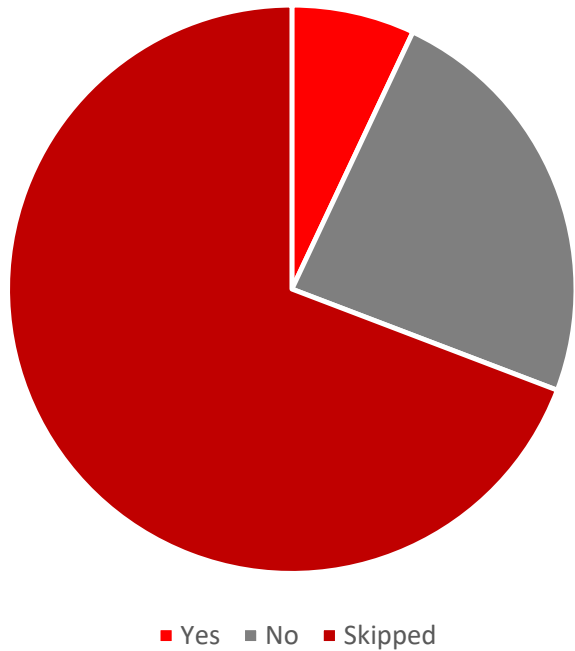
If you answered “never” to Question 8, can you tell us why? (If you do travel by train from Mortimer, move on to Question 13)	
Lack of parking	80
Cost of train travel	9
Availability of services	9
Accessibility to platforms	1
Other	3
Skipped	377



■ Lack of parking ■ Cost of train travel
 ■ Accessibility to platforms ■ Other
 ■ Availability of services
 ■ Skipped

4.17 For those who never travelled from Mortimer Railway Station, we asked if they used Mere oak Park and Ride to access Reading. Interestingly, only a few respondents used Mere oak.

If you never travel by train from Mortimer, do you use instead the Mere oak Park and Ride to get into Reading?	
Yes	33
No	112
Skipped	326



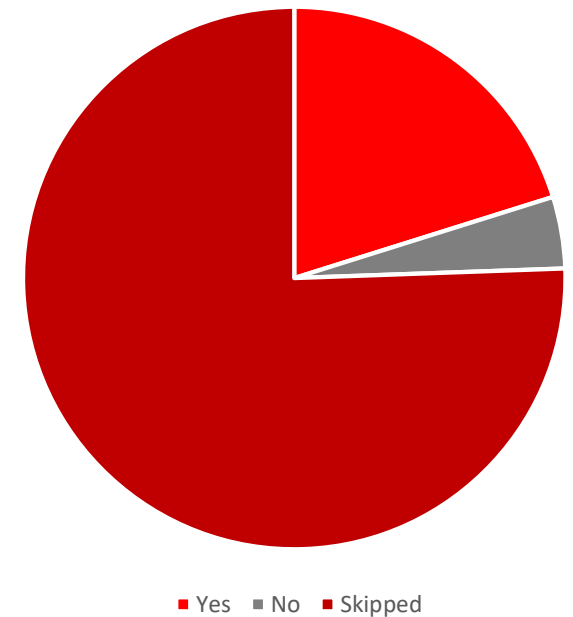
4.18 Those who use Mere oak Park and Ride were then asked why they did so. The clear answer that emerged was the good parking availability.

If you answered yes to Question 10, what is your main reason for using the Park and Ride as opposed to the train? (If you answered "no", move on to Question 13)	
Possess a bus pass	1
Good parking	17
Cost	9
Skipped	451



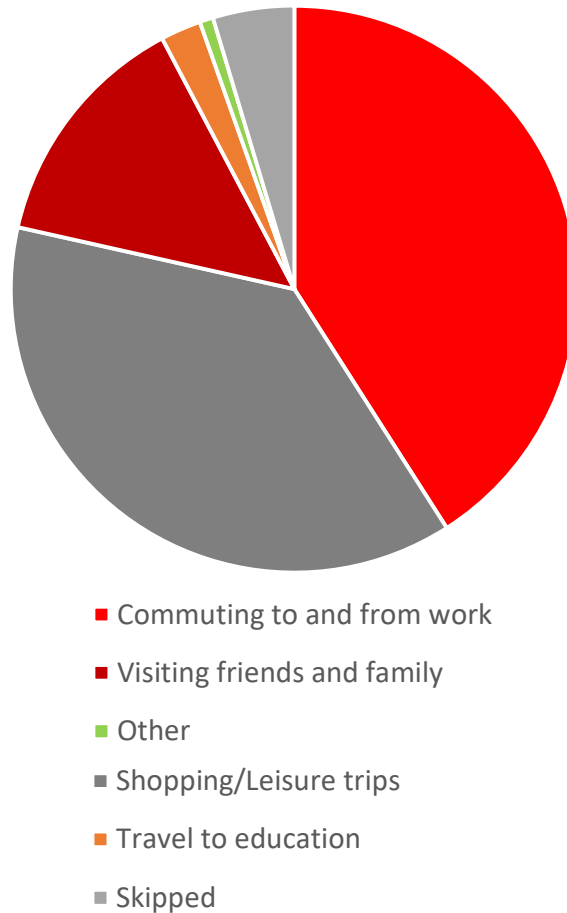
4.19 Respondents who used Mere oak Park and Ride were asked whether improved parking availability at Mortimer Station would be likely to attract them to use the station more frequently. A significant number of people would consider using the local station, as opposed to the park and ride, if facilities at the station were improved.

If you answered yes to Question 10, would more parking at Mortimer Station make you more likely to travel by train? (If you answered "no", move on to Question 13)	
Yes	99
No	21
Skipped	371



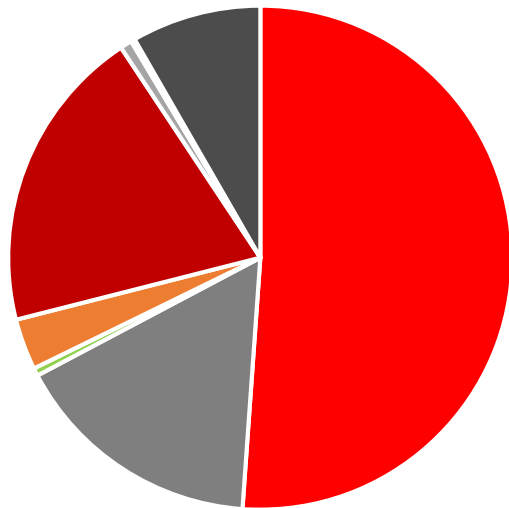
4.20 The nature of journeys to and from Mortimer Station was explored in Question 13. The question allowed respondents to indicate multiple options in their answer, as appropriate to their circumstances, and so more responses have been received than respondents participating. Unsurprisingly, the two most common responses were “commuting to and from work” and “shopping/leisure trips”. Visiting friends and family was the next most common response.

When travelling by train what is the main purpose of your journey?	
Commuting to and from work	265
Shopping/Leisure trips	243
Visiting friends and family	89
Travel to education	15
Other	5
Skipped	30



4.21 Question 14 asked respondents how they travelled to Mortimer Railway Station. The results showed a large majority (67%) of respondents travelled to the station by car – either driving themselves or being dropped off. The results demonstrate the importance of car parking in promoting the use of the station, but also in having improved drop off facilities.

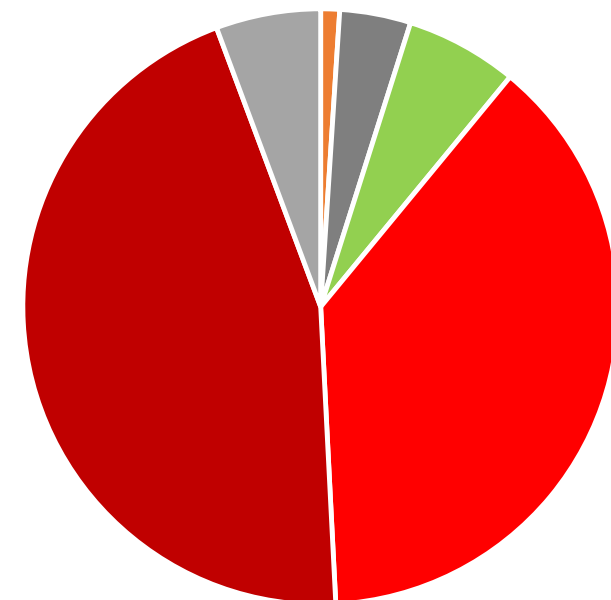
When travelling by train, how do you normally get to the station?	
Car (sole occupant)	203
Car/Taxi drop-off	64
Motorcycle	2
Bicycle	13
Walk	78
Bus	3
Other	1
Skipped	33



- Car (sole occupant)
- Walk
- Motorcycle
- Other
- Car/Taxi drop-off
- Bus
- Bicycle
- Skipped

4.22 Respondents were then given the opportunity to rate the standard of parking available at the station. Almost half of those who answered the question rated parking available at present as “very poor” (47.8%). Respondents who rated available parking as “poor” or “very poor” totalled 410 of 464 (88.4%). These responses reinforce the already established public dissatisfaction with parking available and provide a clear evidence that more parking is needed.

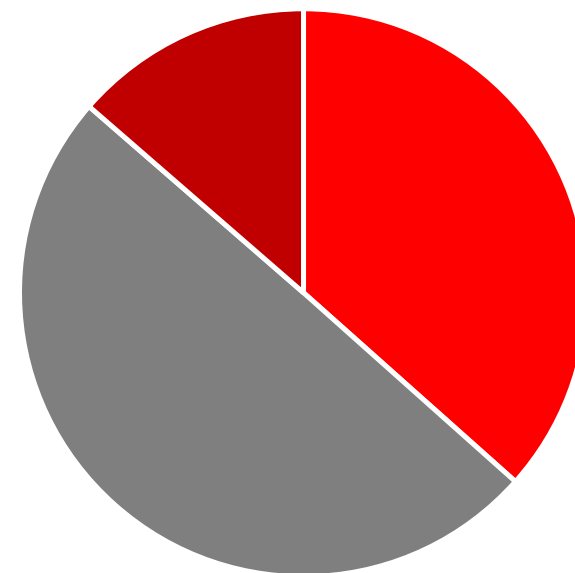
How would you rate the current availability of car parking offered at the station?	
Very good	5
Good	19
Neither good nor poor	30
Poor	188
Very poor	222
Skipped	28



- Very good
- Good
- Neither good nor poor
- Poor
- Very poor
- Skipped

4.23 Parking along the verge of Grazeley Road was then dealt with. A significant number of respondents 42.3% admitted to parking along the verge. Given the nature of the village and the surrounding roads, this surely justifies that an off-highway and managed solution must be found.

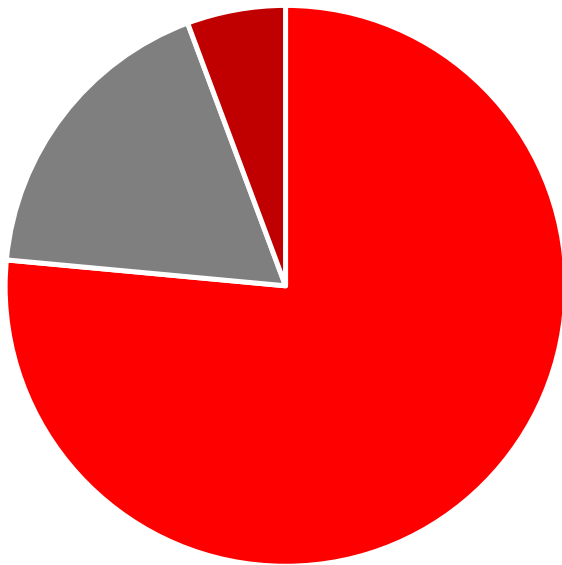
If you do drive to the station, and cannot find a parking space in the car park do you park on verge of Grazeley Road?	
Yes	180
No	245
Skipped	67



- Yes
- No
- Skipped

4.24 Question 17 asked respondents if they would travel by train more frequently if it was easier to park at Mortimer Station. The results returned a very large majority (81%) of those answering the question indicating that they would travel by train more frequently.

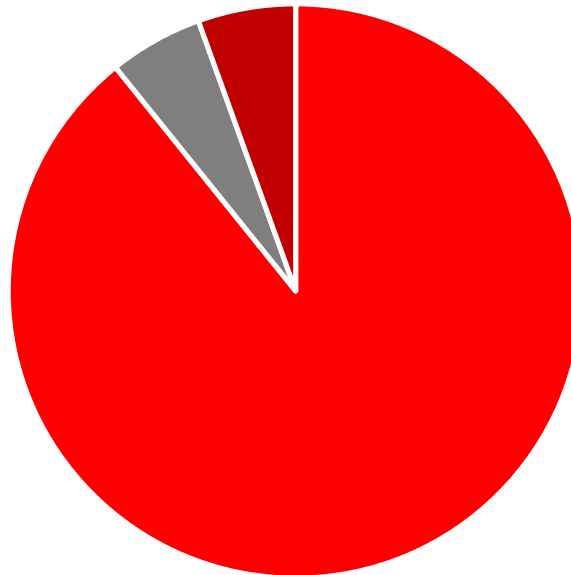
Would you travel by train more frequently if it was easier to park at the station?	
Yes	377
No	88
Skipped	28



■ Yes ■ No ■ Skipped

4.25 Respondents were then asked if they thought that more people generally (besides themselves) would travel by train more frequently if parking was more readily available at the station. Again a clear majority of people (89%) believed that parking would have a positive effect on station usage.

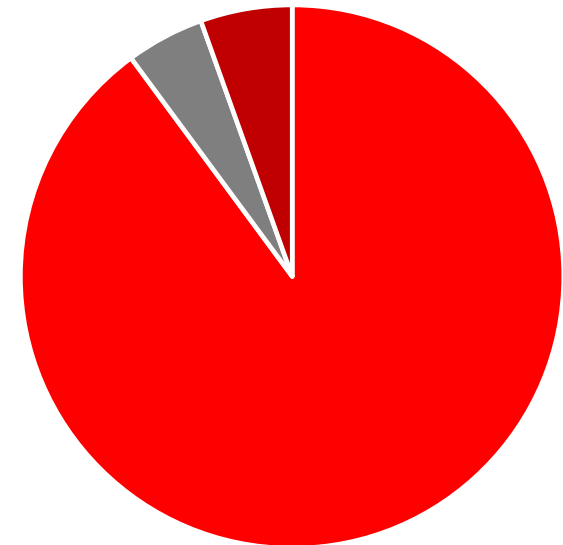
If there was more car parking available at the station do you think more people would travel by train?	
Yes	438
No	26
Skipped	27



■ Yes ■ No ■ Skipped

4.26 Question 19 asked respondents whether they agreed that more car parking should be provided at the station. This question was deliberately placed at the end of Section 2 to require people to think comprehensively about their use of the station and whether additional car parking was a want or a necessity. The results produced a clear majority (95%) in favour of expanded car parking facilities.

Do you agree that more car parking should be provided at Mortimer Railway Station?	
Yes	444
No	23
Skipped	27



■ Yes ■ No ■ Skipped

4.27 A number of key outcomes have emerged from Section 2. Importantly, it was established that Mortimer is a fairly well used railway station with the potential to become very well used – demonstrated by the 211 respondents (44.6%) who use the station on a weekly basis in conjunction with the 377 respondents who indicated that they would travel by train more frequently if car parking was more easily available and the material negative effect a lack of parking is having on station usage, established in Section 1.

4.28 The development team is greatly encouraged by these resultants that show overwhelming support and need for improved car parking facilities at Mortimer Station. Particularly notable were:

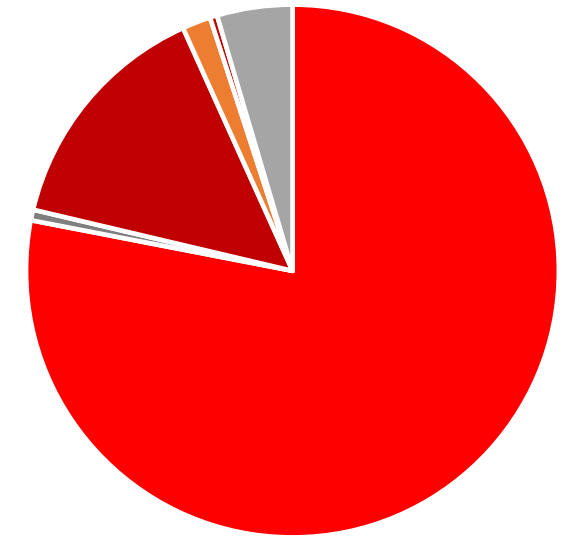
- the 410 people who thought current parking provision at the station was either poor or very poor;
- the 377 people who would travel by train more often if car parking was more easily accessible;
- the 438 people who thought train use would increase if car parking was improved; and
- the 444 people who thought that additional car parking would be appropriate at the station.

About the Survey Respondents

4.29 Section 3 of the survey asked respondents about themselves and their personal circumstances. The questions in this section give respondents the opportunity to provide additional information with the potential to offer an insight into the diverse responses provided and the reasons for those responses.

4.30 Question 20 asked respondents about their employment status. A large majority (82%) of people were in employment at the time of answering the survey; the second largest group of people were retired (15%).

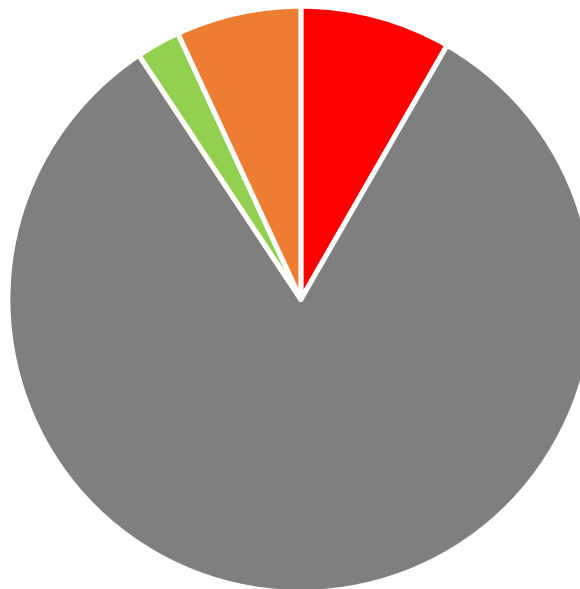
Are you: Employed, Unemployed, Retired, In education, Other (please specify)	
Employed	359
Unemployed	3
Retired	67
In education	8
Other	2
Skipped	21



■ Employed ■ Unemployed ■ Retired
 ■ In education ■ Other ■ Skipped

4.31 The issue of limited mobility access was raised in order to gain an understanding of the number of people affected. The results show that at least 88.4% of people are not affected by limited access to the platform. Although 41 people did indicate that the restricted access currently does limit their use of the station.

Mortimer Station has level access to the Reading bound platform only, could you tell us whether this affects your use of Mortimer Station?	
Yes	41
No	406
Prefer not to say	12
Skipped	34



■ Yes ■ No ■ Prefer not to say ■ Skipped

4.32 Respondents were able to provide comments throughout the survey. Comments received include:

“People are forced to park on the road as a result of the very limited parking at the station. It’s extremely costly and time consuming to travel to Reading or Basingstoke and park there instead. If we have a perfectly viable station here why should we be forced to park unsafely, drive further or pay more for parking?”
 “As more housing is developed in the

Mortimer area, there will be an increasing need for parking at the station and the current situation with parking on the road is not sustainable and can be dangerous.”
 “Parking has become a major issue in Mortimer and there are many dangerous situations arising because of on street parking. This could be significantly alleviated by a larger station car park”

“Lack of parking is a real issue at Mortimer it is a busy station well used by commuters and would be used by more if parking was available have had to drive to Reading to get the train due to lack of available parking it’s very frustrating.”

“Mortimer is a great place to live and the train station adds to the quality of life, but the lack of parking during weekdays makes it difficult to use the train services available.”

“Parking not so bad for me as I usually use the early trains, however my wife who travels later in morning can rarely get a place at the car park where she would prefer to park for security reasons particularly as she returns from work later. Especially in winter months when it’s dark.”

“The car parking facilities need to be increased dramatically. More and More houses are being built in the area, more people travelling and it is too dangerous having cars parked on the road near the

station, we are encouraged to use public transport, but if you can't park at the station it's not possible. This station serves a rural area so one has to travel to the station by car."

"I tend to drive to Reading and park, as guaranteed a space. Would much prefer secure parking in Mortimer - but also, so I could have a beer after work - the 2a bus should go to Mortimer train station!"

- 4.33 These comments demonstrate the support for additional car parking at Mortimer Station and highlight some of the difficulties people face and reasons why a better solution to the current situation needs to be found.

Conclusion

- 4.34 The Survey offered residents, as well as people who work and socialise in Mortimer the opportunity to share their views on Mortimer Railway Station and how it should develop into the future. The survey attracted 494 responses, providing a broad representative sample of popular opinion locally.
- 4.35 The survey was live on "survey monkey" and distributed to properties via the Parish magazine. A webpage was set up www.pro-vision.co.uk/mortimerstation to provide details on the reasons for the survey.
- 4.36 It should be noted that the Mortimer Station catchment area includes the RG7 1, RG7 2 and RG7 3. **The survey was only distributed to about a third of the catchment area due to cost. It is therefore reasonable to assume that had the survey been distributed on a wider basing, the results would have been overwhelming.**
- 4.37 Notwithstanding the narrow survey area, the results of the survey have reinforced the clear need for increased parking provision at the station. **The survey has established that more than 350 people would travel by train more often and, thought others would do so, if more parking was available at the station. Moreover, over 400 people actively**

supported the prospect of additional parking at the station.

- 4.38 The extent of people indicating that they would use the station more frequently (377) if there was more car parking available confirms that the addition of new 150 space car park is justified i.e. there is a need for a new car park in this location. Demand demonstrated by the survey would justify a substantially larger increase in the station's parking capacity than just 100 spaces, hence the proposed increase to 150 spaces. However, clearly a balance must be struck to minimise the impact of an additional car park given the rural nature of the area within which the station is located and therefore the proposal has not gone further than 150 spaces i.e. it doesn't meet the totality of the need identified.
- 4.39 The demand demonstrated by the survey provides quantitative evidence of the need for the "substantial" increase of parking capacity at the station and the use of a large site, which would be required to accommodate such a development. The proposed site is considered to be size sufficient for the proposed capacity increase.

5. PUBLIC EXHIBITION AND SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

- 5.1 A public consultation event was held on Tuesday 26 February 2019 at Mortimer Village Library, 27 Victoria Road, Mortimer Common. The event was open to the public and ran between 1pm and 8pm.

INVOLVING LOCAL RESIDENTS


- 5.2 The event was advertised by posters placed on the Parish Council's noticeboards in the village. The Parish Council also made use of their Twitter profile to publicise an advert prepared for the event and notification of the event was shared on the village Facebook page
- 5.3 The exhibition comprised 3 boards which set the context and background of the proposal. The boards included an illustrative layout of the site and a 3D visualisation of the proposed development. A copy of the exhibition boards from the event is provided below:

Community Consultation Event "Station Car Park"




When: Tuesday 26th February 2019, 1pm - 8pm

Where: Mortimer Village Library, 27 Victoria Road, Mortimer Common, Reading, RG7 3SH

Please come along to take a look at our proposals to improve and increase the car parking at Mortimer Railway Station. This is your opportunity to have your say.



If you are unable to attend the event copies of the proposals and display material will be available to view and download via our website www.pro-vision.co.uk/mortimerstation from the 27th and we invite feedback via e-mail to mortimerstation@pro-vision.co.uk

Mortimer Railway Station Car Park

A New Car Park and Pick-up / Drop-off area at Mortimer Station

What is proposed?

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council are working in partnership with Great Western Railways to improve parking at Mortimer Station. The Parish is proposing to construct a new car park south of the railway line with access from Station Road.



Cars parked in The Street

The car park would include 150 parking spaces for cars and a short stay drop-off/pick-up area. Pedestrian access to the south platform would be via steps and a ramp. Additional space for cycle parking is also proposed.

The existing field gate access from Station Road will be closed and a new access created south of the road bridge.

There is potential to also install a footway over the road bridge but this would mean provision of traffic lights on Station Road.

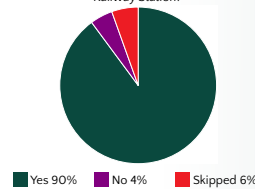
Access to the northern platform would not be affected.

Why?

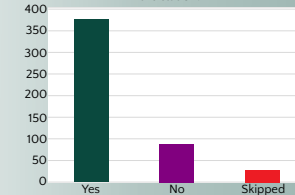
Improved access to Mortimer Station is identified as an aim in West Berkshire Council's Core Strategy. The Parish Council are committed to improving vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access to the station. The Parish Council approached West Berkshire Council about a new car park in February 2017. Council Officers accepted that there was an objective to improve parking at the station but asked the Parish Council to evidence the need.

In June and July 2018, a survey of Mortimer residents and people who use the station was conducted by the Parish Council, assisted by planning consultants Pro Vision. The survey attracted a total of 494 responses, with 90% indicating support for more parking at the station.

Do you agree that more car parking should be provided at Mortimer Railway Station?



Would you travel by train more frequently if it was easier to park at the station?



What happens next?

Pro Vision are now preparing a planning application to West Berkshire Council for the car park on behalf of the Parish Council. The purpose of this event is to present our proposals and invite feedback.

We would be very grateful if you could fill out our feedback form either by placing your response in the comments box or by email to mortimerstation@pro-vision.co.uk.

A positive response to this consultation will strengthen the application and show West Berkshire Council the volume of support for the proposals in the village and local area and feedback will be summarised in our Statement of Community Involvement.



Mortimer Railway Station Car Park

The Proposed Layout



KEY

-  Existing Tree, Hedgerow Retained
-  Proposed Parking Space, New Tree, Hedgerow Planting
-  Proposed Height Restriction Barrier
-  Proposed Cycle Storage
-  Possible Traffic Lights And 2m Footway Across Bridge

Mortimer Railway Station Car Park

Existing

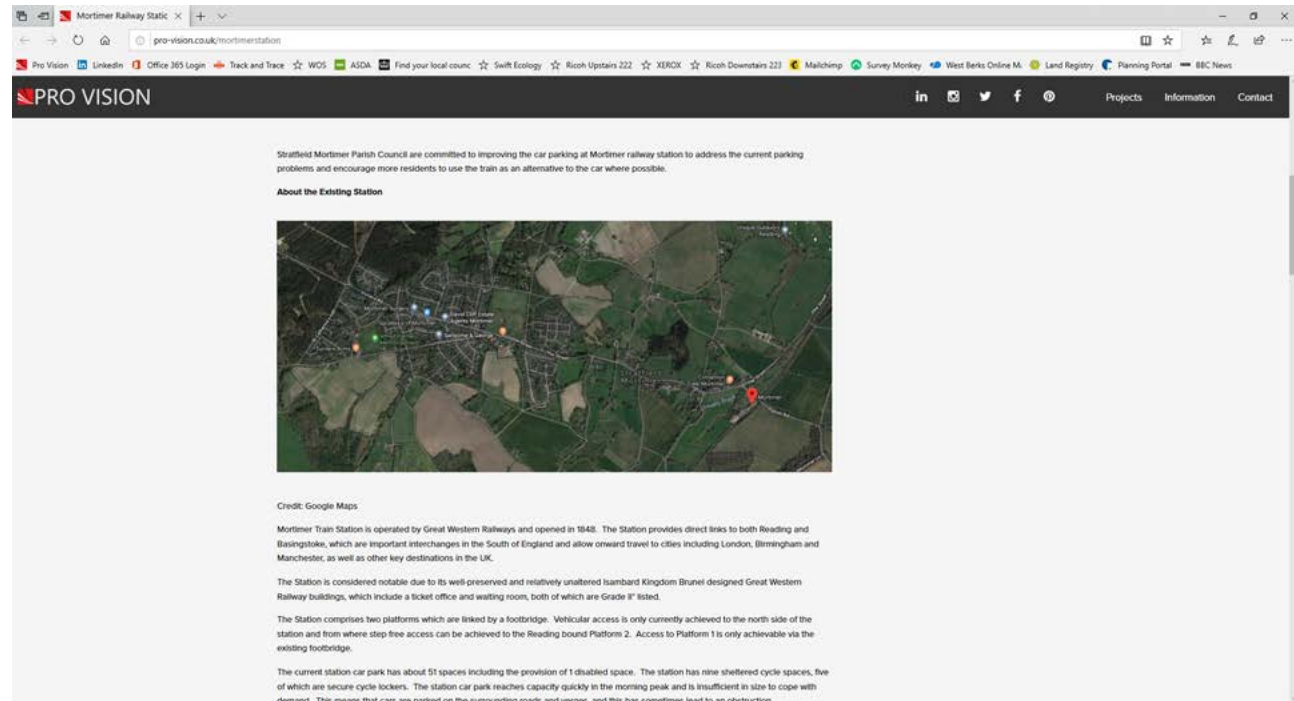
Proposed



- 5.4 The exhibition was hosted by the development team comprising: the Parish Council and Pro Vision. As well as answering questions and addressing comments, the development team were proactive in their attempts to stimulate responses from those attending.
- 5.5 The exhibition was attended by approximately 82 people.
- 5.6 A feedback form was provided for attendees to complete. It comprised a series of questions seeking the views of the respondent on the principle of an additional car park, their use of the station, and the specific design details of the proposal. Fifty-two forms were returned at the event with another nine subsequently returned by post and email.

Website Usage Statistics

- 5.7 A website was launched before the consultation event (26 February 2019). High resolution copies of the boards presented at the Consultation Event and the Feedback Form were made available on the site.



- 5.8 The page was viewed a total of 44 times in the period from 26 February to Tuesday 12th March. Analysis indicates that a total of 34 people viewed the page, a number of return visits accounted for the slightly higher final viewing figure. Visitors to the page spent an average time of 11 minutes and 11 seconds on the page.

Letters Received

- 5.9 Two letters were received concerning the development via email, one included the information necessary to complete a comment form in list format and was counted as a full response.

CONSULTATION HISTORY

- 5.10 The Parish Council have led the extensive consultation process and have tried to ensure that everyone has had the opportunity to cooperate.
- 5.11 In June and July 2018, a Community Survey was conducted by Pro Vision (on behalf of the Parish Council) into the need for increased parking capacity at the station. The survey attracted 494 responses, with the results demonstrating overwhelming need and support for improved car parking facilities at the station. The following conclusions are copied from the Assessment of the Survey prepared, which is submitted with the application:
- 410 people thought current parking provision at the station was either poor or very poor;
 - 377 people would travel by train more often if car parking was more easily accessible;
 - 438 people thought train use would increase if car parking was improved; and
 - 444 people thought that additional car parking would be appropriate at the station.

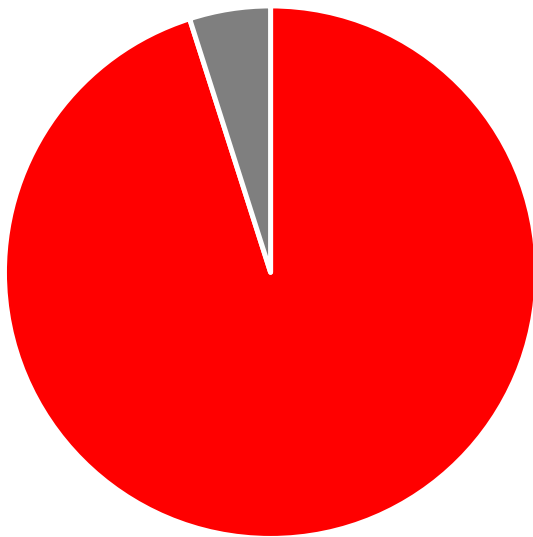
6. RESPONSES TO FEEDBACK

Summary of Feedback

- 6.1 A total of sixty-one feedback forms were received. Not all questions on the forms were completed and Question 2 invited and received multiple answers.
- 6.2 The responses to the questions on the feedback form have been collated to produce the following:

Q1. Do you support an additional car park?

Response	Total	Percentage
Yes	58	95%
No	3	5%

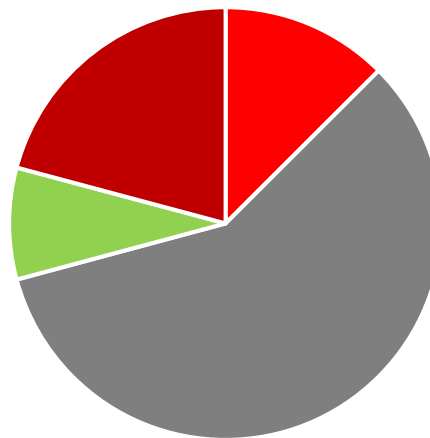


■ Yes ■ No

The results demonstrate the clear and definite local support for an additional car park serving Mortimer Station. The results reflect the existing poor provision and the widely held local sentiments to make better use of the railway station and travel sustainably.

Q2. Would this increase your use of the Station?

Response	Total	Percentage
Yes - Commuting	9	12.5%
Yes - Leisure	42	58.3%
Yes - Other	6	8.3%
No	15	20.8%

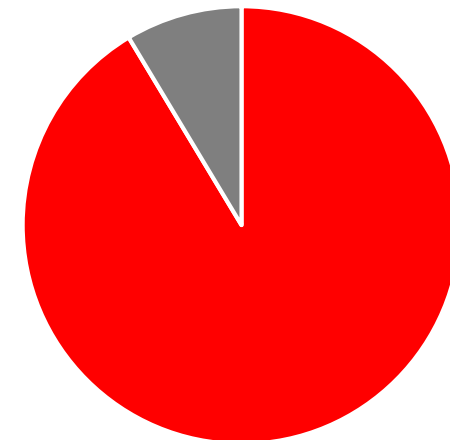


■ Yes - Commuting ■ Yes - Leisure
■ Yes - Other ■ No

Responses returned show that the large majority of respondents do intend to take advantage of improved parking provision at the Station. Interestingly leisure users were identified as the most likely to use the station if parking was improved, this perhaps reflects the poor performance of the Station at present among those who have greater choice as to how they travel. While not all respondents who support additional car parking would make use of it, a very impressive 79.2% would travel by train more frequently.

Q3. Do you support the proposed layout and number of spaces?

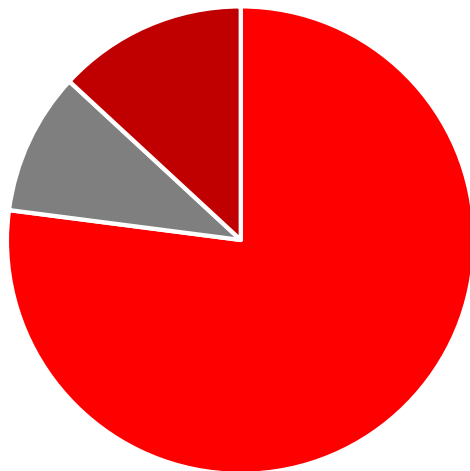
Response	Total	Percentage
Yes	53	91.4%
No	5	8.6%



The responses indicate widespread local support for the proposals as currently drafted. The development team were particularly keen to get the opinion of the local community on the proposed number of spaces in the car park (size). It is greatly encouraging that over 90% of respondents have indicated that they support the proposed 150 spaces. The size of support also validates the Council's pre-application advice to adopt the proposed layout.

Q4. Would you find it helpful to have a drop-off/pick-up area?

Response	Total	Percentage
Yes	47	77.0%
No	6	9.8%
Maybe	8	13.1%

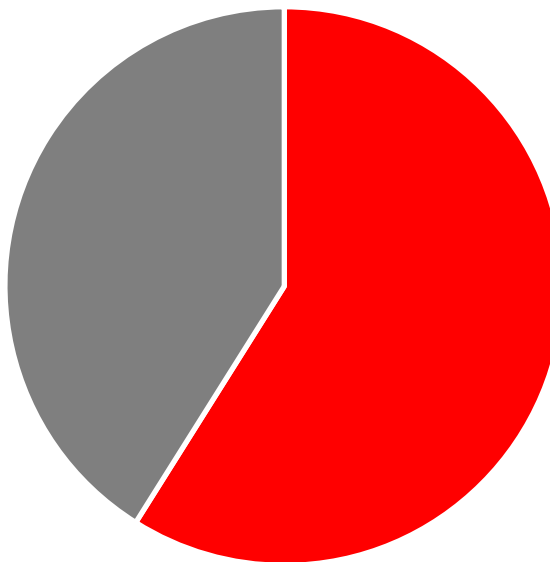


■ Yes ■ No ■ Maybe

The results indicate that although less people are interested in a drop-off/pick-up area than increase parking capacity, that a local need does exist and that the need isn't much smaller than the need for additional parking.

Q5. Would you find the provision of additional cycle stands / secure cycle storage at the station useful?

Response	Total	Percentage
Yes	33	58.9%
No	23	41.1%

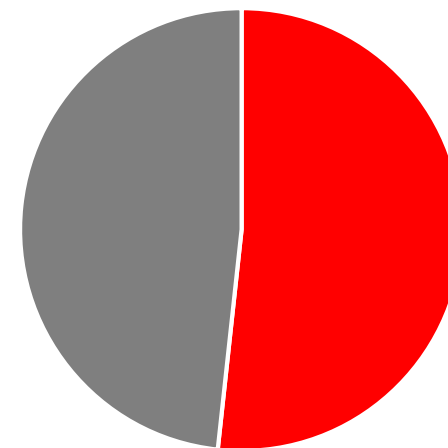


■ Yes ■ No

The responses show a majority of respondents do want to cycle more frequently and be able to safely store a bicycle at the station. It is noted that the majority in favour is slimmer than in previous questions, the development team believes the results reflect the ongoing progression of cycling from a fringe activity to a main stream transport mode and leisure activity. Nonetheless the majority in favour of improved cycling provision is encouraging.

Q6. Do you support the provision of a footway on Station Road between the two car parks and the introduction of traffic lights to the existing road bridge?

Response	Total	Percentage
Yes	30	51.7%
No	28	48.3%



■ Yes ■ No

Notwithstanding genuine local concerns about the proposed traffic arrangements on the bridge, the responses do indicate the proposed arrangements are supported by a majority locally. It was noted that a large number of responses identified the impact of proposed traffic lights on private cars and congestion during the rush hour.

EMERGING THEMES

6.3 The following comments were provided on feedback forms received:

'The traffic flow across the bridge is dangerous at present. Traffic lights would make the bridge safer.'

'I don't really want any traffic lights but I can accept them to make the bridge safer for disabled people.'

'Any traffic lights will cause really bad congestion in the morning!'

'Disabled access is so important! I welcome the proposals because they would improve the existing disabled access.'

'This is a good idea which will reduce the number of cars parked on The Street.'

'I simply don't want traffic lights here.'

'Mortimer needs more parking at the station.'

'The car park needs to be carefully managed, including pricing.'

'I am retired and would be able to use the station during the day if I could get parked.'

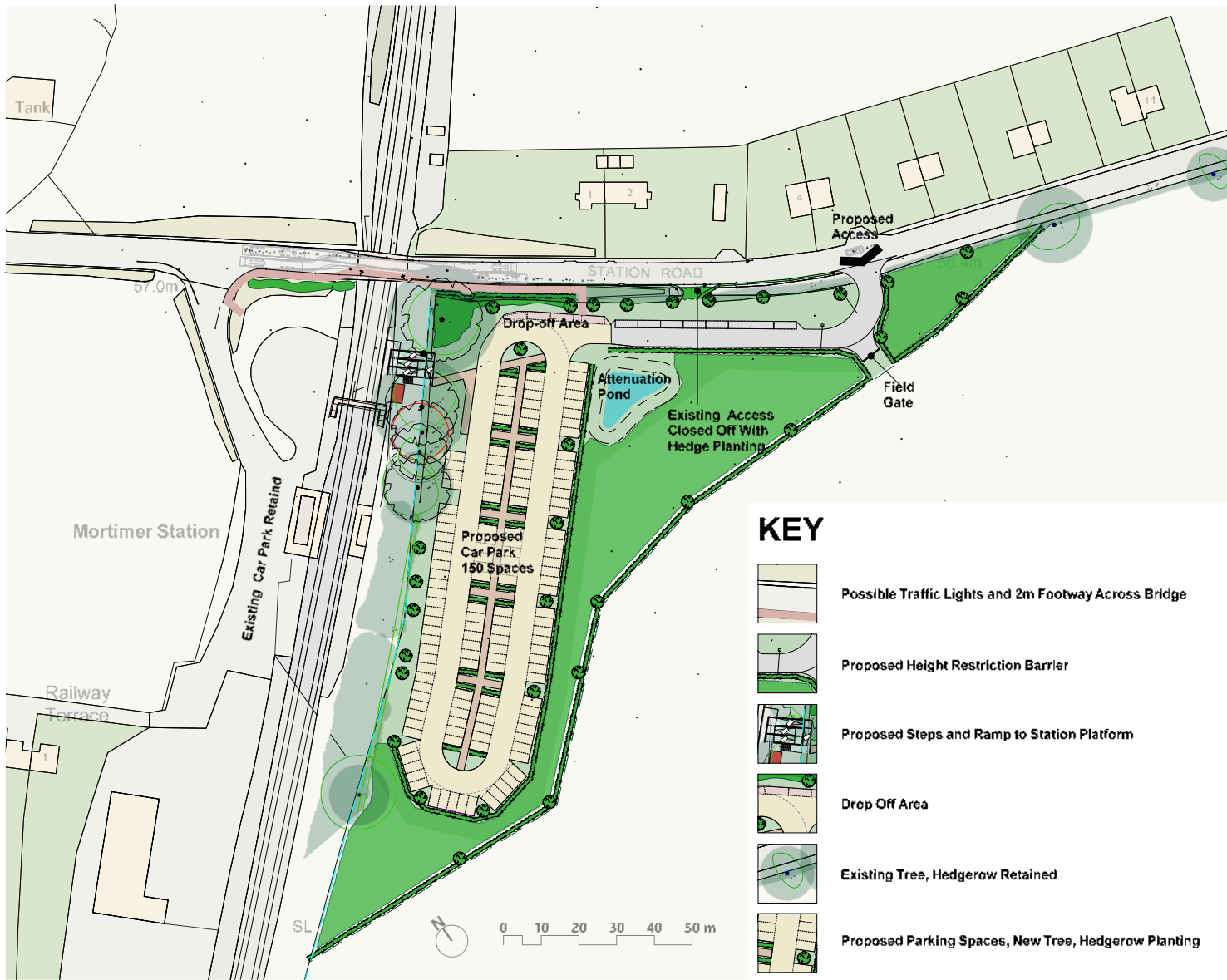
'I think a ramp bridge should be installed north of the existing footbridge on the station platforms.'

6.4 The issues arising from these comments have been considered:

Comment	How has it been addressed?
The traffic flow across the bridge is dangerous at present Traffic lights would make the bridge safer	This is an interesting comment, as it seems that a number of respondents would support the improvements to the bridge, which are proposed for pedestrian safety, because the improvements would also have wider benefits to driver safety. The development team accepts that the bridge is an historical structure and landmark which was not originally designed for the level of vehicular traffic it sees today and is narrow for modern cars. The development team consider that managing the flow of traffic across the bridge by way of traffic lights will have both safety and functional benefits for drivers using Station Road.
I don't really want any traffic lights but I can accept them to make the bridge safer for disabled people	The development team accept that the introduction of traffic lights on the bridge would be a noticeable change to the setting. However the results suggest that a majority of local people agree that the interests of all road users must be balanced which means making provision for people of all backgrounds and ability.
Any traffic lights will cause really bad congestion in the morning	Traffic lights would reduce the number of cars which can cross the bridge at any one time and it is acknowledged that this would both slow traffic and add to journey times. However the effect on journey times is negligible and must be balanced against the wider benefits of the proposal. The proposals would also have a positive effect on road safety, particularly by reducing the pressure to park on The Street.
Disabled access is so important I welcome the proposals because they would improve the existing disabled access	The development team attach the highest importance to equal access and safety for all station users. We agree that every opportunity should be taken to improve access for everyone where practical, feasible and deliverable.
This is a good idea which will reduce the number of cars parked on The Street	The development team (particularly the Parish Council) are acutely aware of the issues around car parking on The Street and how this impacts existing residents, the safety of road users and School traffic. The Parish Council intend to pursue a Traffic Regulation Order for on-street parking controls in the event that this application is successful.
I simply don't want traffic lights here	The development team understand that some local residents do not want to see any more traffic lights in the village. We respect this view but believe that it must be balanced against the necessity to improve access to the station and the facilities for Station users
Mortimer needs more parking at the station	The Parish Council have long been aware of the negative effects that a lack of parking at the station has had on the village. We believe that the proposals will have real economic, social, and environmental benefits.
The car park needs to be carefully managed, including pricing	The car park would be managed by Great Western Rail (GWR) who are committed to managing all their assets fairly to enable everyone who might want to access. The cost of parking is outside of the Parish Council's control and the remit of the planning process.
I am retired and would be able to use the station during the day if I could get parked	The Need Survey conducted in June and July 2018 identified that almost as many people used the station for 'shopping/leisure trips' as did for commuting (243 compared to 265). The development team feel that it is important to cater for leisure users and that a 150 space car park and drop-off/pick-up facility will provide capacity during the day at the same time as the station accommodates commuters.
I think a ramp bridge should be installed north of the existing footbridge on the station platforms	The development team have considered this option however the cost of this together is prohibitive at this time.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 A programme of engagement with the local community has been undertaken prior to the submission of the application. The public exhibition and consultation periods have succeeded in attracting comments from the community which have contributed to the amendment of the proposals.
- 7.2 The consultation process has demonstrated clear local support for the principle of a substantial new car park at Mortimer Station together with the size, layout, and positioning of the proposals.
- 7.3 In accordance with the Government's aim to promote effective community engagement in the planning process and the advice set out in the Framework and the Adopted Statement of Community Involvement, the applicant has sought to engage with the local community, the local planning authority, and consult extensively within Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council prior to the submission of this application.
- 7.4 The level of pre-application consultation with the local community has met the requirements of national and local policy and guidance. The process has allowed the views of local people to be taken into consideration and comments received have informed the proposals.
- 7.5 Following the submission of the application, the Parish Council and Pro Vision will monitor any consultation responses which are made to the Council during the statutory consultation process and where possible and appropriate will seek to work with Officers to address any concerns raised.



STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
DECEMBER 2019

MORTIMER RAILWAY STATION CAR PARK
PROJECT NO. 2233

PRO VISION

Grosvenor Court, Ampfield Hill, Ampfield
Romsey, Hants SO51 9BD
Tel: 01794 368 698

www.pro-vision.co.uk



Technical Note

Mortimer Station Car Park Parking Demand

Project: Mortimer Station Car Park

SMA Ref: 6074

Subject: Car Parking Demand

Prepared by: David Wiseman

Date: 10/09/20

Introduction

- 1.1. At the West Berkshire Council's Planning Committee on 5 August 2020 the planning application for a new car park at Mortimer station was considered. The application was deferred until further information was provided.
- 1.2. Councillors requested that justification on the need for 150 additional car parking spaces at the proposed car park at Mortimer Railway Station was required.
- 1.3. This Technical Note reviews the car parking survey undertaken in July 2017 at the existing station car park and together with the questionnaire submitted to only a third of the catchment area of Mortimer station as part of the Statement of Community Involvement, sets out a case for an additional car park of 150 spaces.
- 1.4. It must also be recognised that for potential rail users it is important before deciding to take the train that there is sufficient parking available at a station, without such confidence, drivers are most likely to drive to an alternative rail station where parking can be guaranteed or alternatively not use the train, instead driving to their place of destination. This is even more relevant in locations such as Mortimer where the station is located away from the village and the majority of the catchment population. This is not sustainable and is against national policy of trying to encourage use of public transport.

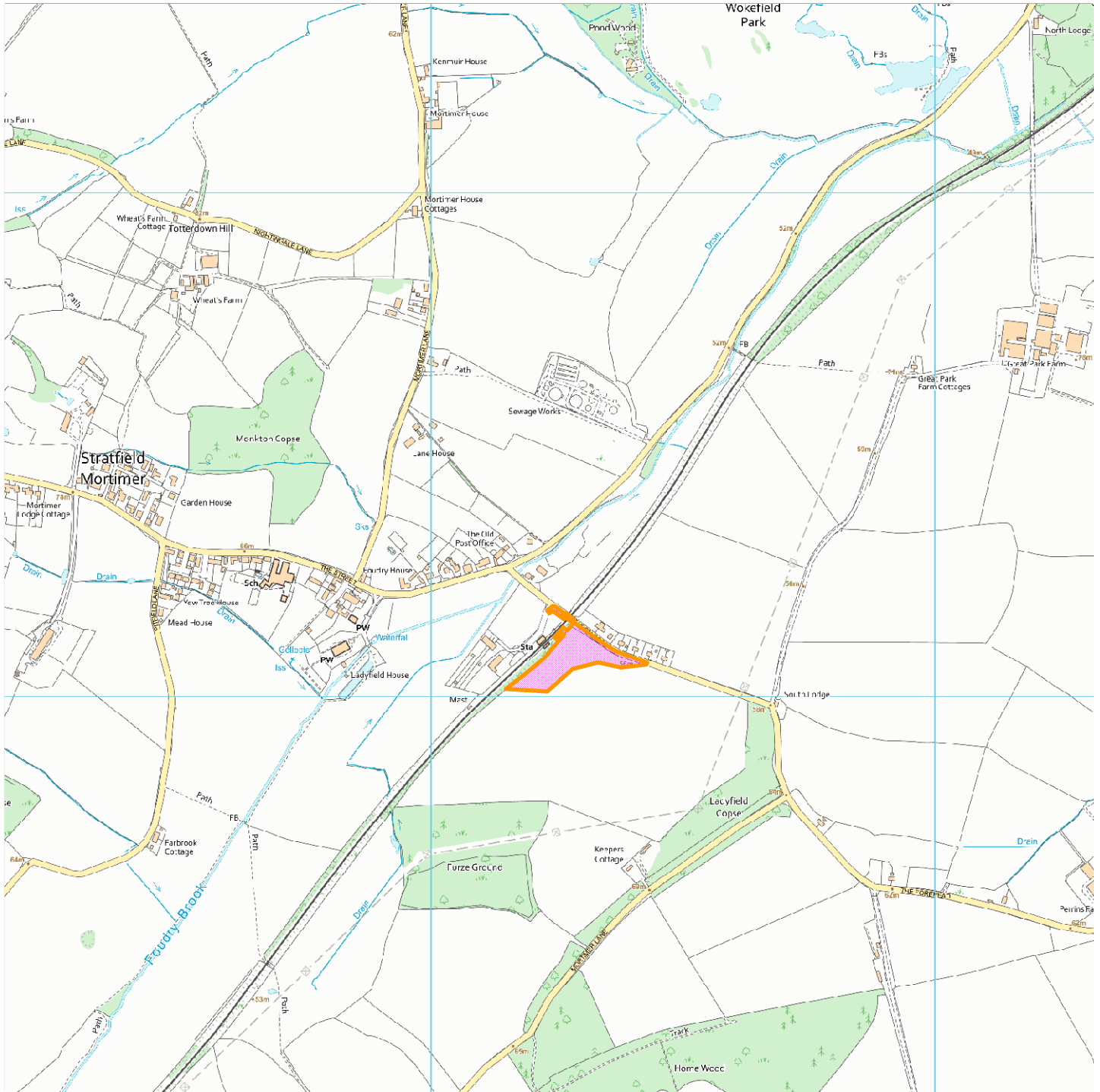
Existing Station Car Park and surrounding local roads

- 1.5. The existing station car park has capacity for 53 spaces.
- 1.6. A car parking beat survey undertaken at the existing Mortimer Station Car Park on Tuesday 4 July 2017 demonstrated that between the hours of 0930hrs and 1630hrs the car park is almost at capacity with only 3 or 4 spaces available.

- 1.7. At the same time the car parking survey was undertaken at the station a parking survey of 'The Street' was also undertaken which confirmed that circa 20 cars were parked between the hours of 0900hrs and 1700hrs.

Community Involvement

- 1.8. In 2018 as part of the Statement of Community Involvement a questionnaire was sent out to a third of the catchment population of Mortimer Station.
- 1.9. 377 people (80%) responded to the question that they would use the station if more parking was increased and 80 people responded to say they did not use the station because it lacked parking.
- 1.10. 85 people stated that they used the station on a daily basis
- 1.11. However, if the questionnaire had been extended to include the whole catchment area of the station such as the villages of Silchester, Burghfield Common / Burghfield, Sulhampstead, Grazeley and Beech Hill it is not unreasonable to assume that the figure of 80 people not using the station could be at least have been 3 times that figure. Therefore $80 \times 3 = 240$ it is estimated that 240 people would potentially use the station if more parking was available.
- 1.12. Recognising that not all the people would use the station at any one time, using the data available 53 parking spaces against 85 current people using the station on a daily basis $53/85 = 0.62$
- 1.13. If we apply the above factor to the projected 240 people ($240 \times 0.62 = 149$) and also take into account those cars that are parking on-street (20), there is a need for 169 spaces.
- 1.14. A new car park of 150 spaces + the existing 53 space car park would provide a total of 203 spaces.
- 1.15. Furthermore, no assessment has been made of the potential demand for the station use from the 110 houses currently being built in the centre of Mortimer as part of the MOR006 NDP allocation, the approved Travel Plan for that site is targeting a 9% shift from using the car to the train. On that basis, there is potential for a demand for a further 10 spaces (179).
- 1.16. Great Western Rail has also advised that over the last 15 years passenger journey from Mortimer has increased by just 3% as opposed to 95% increase in passenger numbers across the industry. This difference is due to inadequate parking provision at Mortimer station.
- 1.17. There is sufficient evidence therefore for a 150 space car park at Mortimer Station.



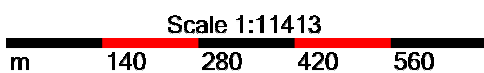
Map Centre Coordinates :

Scale : 1:11413

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Organisation	West Berkshire Council
Department	
Comments	Not Set
Date	20 October 2020
SLA Number	0100024151



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Site Address

Photographs for Eastern Area Planning Committee
Application 20/00674/FUL
Land near Mortimer Station



Existing agricultural access looking towards railway line from Station Road.



View from Existing Agricultural Access looking into field with railway line to the right from Station Road.



View from existing agricultural access looking into field from Station Road.



View from existing agricultural access looking into field with boundary to Station Road on the left.



View opposite existing agricultural access towards dwellings on Station Road towards bridge over the railway.



View opposite existing agricultural access towards dwellings on Station Road.



View opposite existing agricultural access towards dwellings on Station Road away from the railway.



From Arboricultural Impact Assessment - Oak tree within field towards bridge on Station Road.



From Arboricultural Impact Assessment – same oak tree viewed from Mortimer station .



From Arboricultural Impact Assessment – from Mortimer station. Trees to the right between which proposed ramp access.



Photograph 2. View north west / north / east from within site (private land)



Visualisation Type: Type 1
 Date: 12.08.19
 Weather conditions: Cloudy with occasional sunny spells, variable visibility (good to no distance)
 Equipment used: Olympus E510 Digital SLR camera with 15-50mm zoom lens set to 20mm focal length
 Images have been produced in early afternoon. 60% to 70% of the day. Photographs were produced at 10:15 following a clear afternoon period.
 Note: Photographs were only taken from a vantage point of a line of observation. It does not provide any indication of visibility conditions.
 Any other information or requirements of the client should be provided by the client prior to the start of the project.

From Landscape Visual Impact Assessment.



Photograph 3. View west / south west from within eastern part of site (private land)



Photograph 4. View towards site (south east) from northbound platform

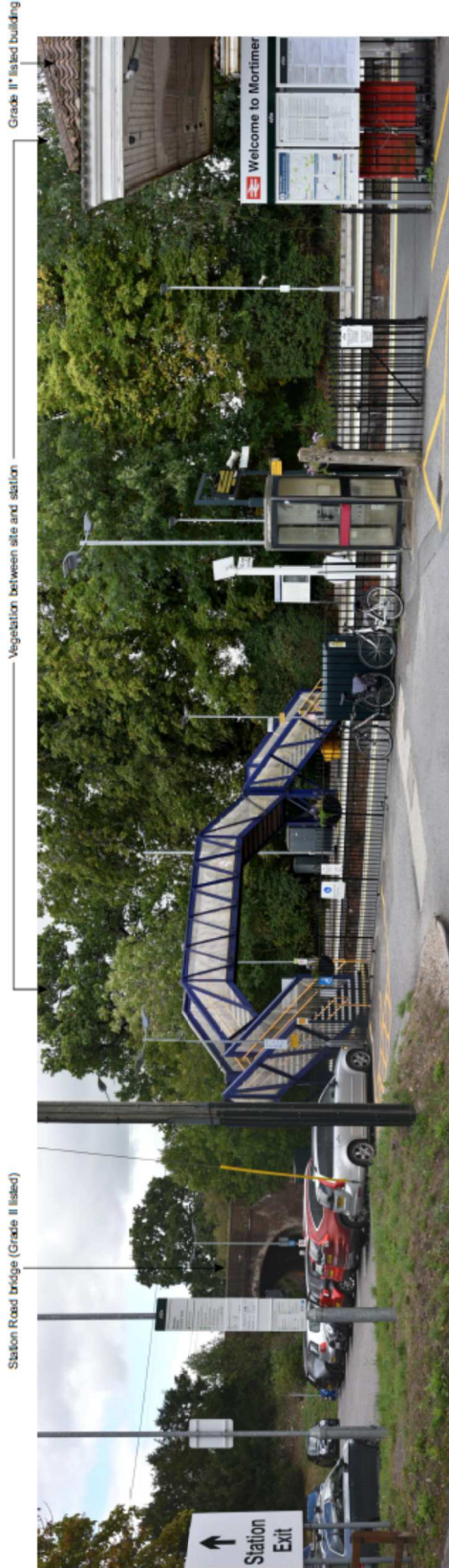
Visualisation Type: Type 1
 Date: 12.08.19
 Weather conditions: Cloudy with occasional sunny gaps; variable visibility (good to moderate)
 Equipment used: Olympus D510 Digital SLR camera with 15-50mm zoom lens set to 20mm focal length
 Image processed: Images processed and fit to ratio approx. 65% to 70% (final) Panoramic image produced by stitching together several photographs taken
 Note: Photograph images are only a representation of what the viewer would see from the location shown. The images are not intended to be used as a substitute for a professional visual impact assessment.
 Planning Department, Department of Infrastructure, Transport and Planning, 100 Victoria Road, Dublin 12, Ireland

Project:
**Mortimer Station
 Car Park**
 Date:
 Jan 2020
 Drawing no:
 4/51/3
 Rev:

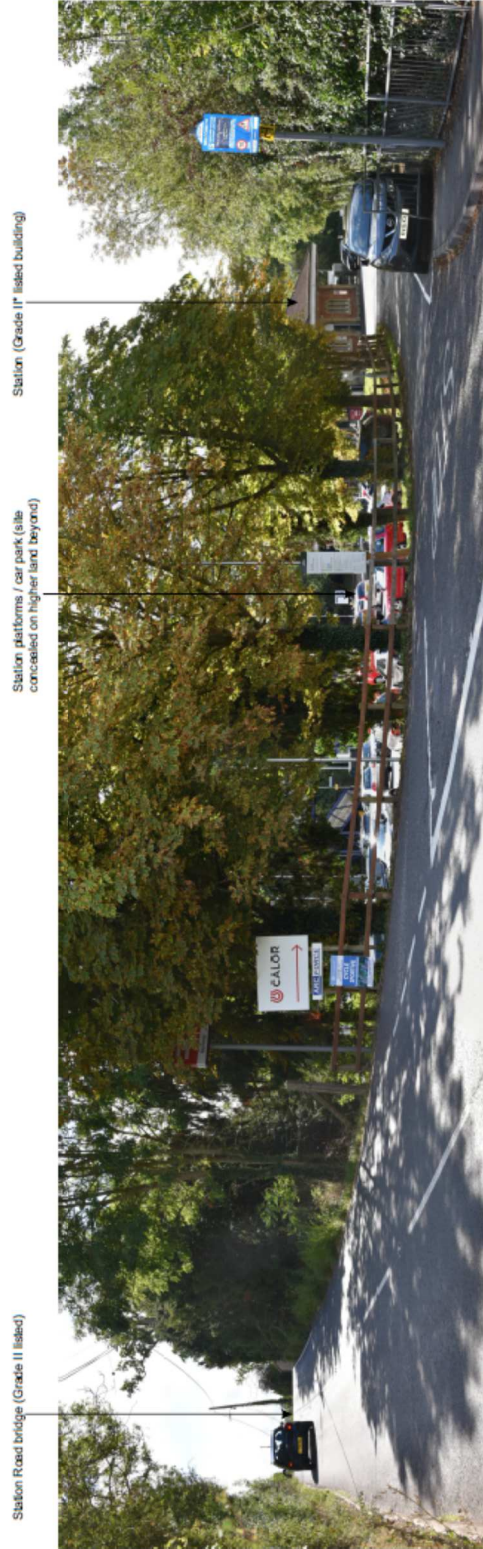
Enderby Associates
 CHARLETTOWN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
 100 VICTORIA ROAD, DUBLIN 12, IRELAND
 Tel: 01 274 7424
 Fax: 01 274 7425

From Landscape Visual Impact Assessment.

Plan 3.3



Photograph 5. View towards site (north east / east) from station approach / car park



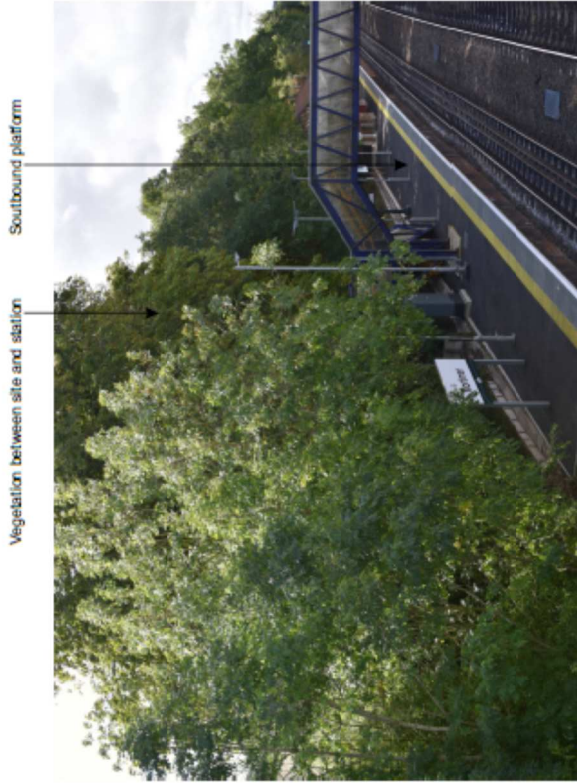
Photograph 6. View south east / south west from Station Road at junction with station access road

Visualisation Type: Type 1
 Date: 12.08.19
 Weather conditions: Cloudy with occasional sunny spells, variable visibility (good to moderate)
 Equipment used: Olympus Digital SL Camera with 18-100mm zoom lens set to 50mm focal length
 Image taken through medium to high quality glass. GDS to the left of the photograph is indicated in following photos when otherwise stated.
 Note: Photographs taken are only a representation of a view of the proposed site with proposed weather and visibility conditions.
 All views represent an approximation of the view, being taken from a position to the north of the site, to capture the experience of the view.

Project:
**Mortimer Station
 Car Park**
 Date: Jan. 2020
 Drawing No: 455/3.4
 Rev:

Enderby Associates
 CHARTERED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
 1000 CHICHESTER, SUSSEX PO19 1SE
 The Land
 Mark
 MORTIMER STATION
 Tel: 01243 792 000

From Landscape Visual Impact Assessment.



Photograph 7. View south from Station Road bridge



Photograph 8. View south from Station Road bridge

Visualisation Type: Type 1
 Date: 12.08.19
 Weather conditions: Cloudy with occasional sunny spells, variable visibility (good to moderate)
 Equipment used: Olympus E510 Digital SLR camera with 18-135mm zoom lens set to 20mm focal length
 Image street imagery reduced in size by approx. 65% to fit A3 sheet. Panoramic images reduced to fit drawing sheet unless otherwise stated.
 Note: Photographs taken on site in accordance with a view of the project to date, with general weather and visibility conditions.
 They only represent an approximation of the view that might be perceived by a receptor and do not capture the exact areas of the view.

From Landscape Visual Impact Assessment.

Project:
**Mortimer Station
 Car Park**
 Date: Jan 2020
 Drawing no: 435/3.5
 Rev:

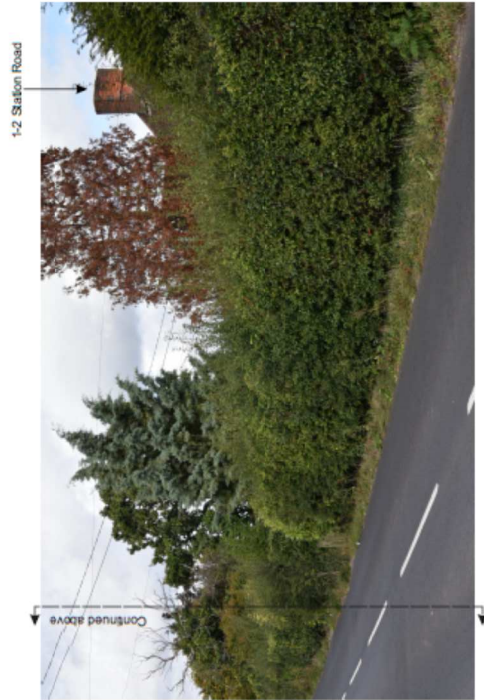
Enderby Associates
 CHARTERED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
 ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING CONSULTANTS
 The Studio
 Mortimer Station
 Wiltshire, SN11 1 7J
 Tel: 01249 793 000

Plan 3.5

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Photograph 9. View west / south west from site gateway on Station Road



Manufacture Type: Type 1
 Date: 12.08.19
 Weather conditions: Cloudy with occasional sunny spells; variable visibility (good to moderate)
 Wind speed: 10-15 mph (moderate breeze)
 Temperature: 15°C (moderate)
 Humidity: 65% (moderate)
 Visibility: 10-15 km (moderate)
 The photographs were taken from a vantage point of approximately 100m from the site gateway. The photographs were taken from a vantage point of approximately 100m from the site gateway. The photographs were taken from a vantage point of approximately 100m from the site gateway. The photographs were taken from a vantage point of approximately 100m from the site gateway.

From Landscape Visual Impact Assessment.



Photograph 10. View west from Station Road



Photograph 11. View north west along Station Road



Photograph 12. View west along Station Road approaching Mortimer



Photograph 13. View west along Station Road from junction with track to Great Park Farm

Visualisation Type: Type 1
 Date: 12.08.18
 Weather conditions: Cloudy with occasional sunny spells, variable visibility (good to moderate)
 Equipment used: Olympus E510 Digital SLR camera with 15-45mm zoom lens set to 20mm focal length
 Engineer: Robert Frayn, Enderby Associates
 Note: Photographs images are only a representation of a view of the proposed site from a particular vantage point and should not be used for any purpose other than illustrative purposes. The images are not intended to be used for any other purpose.

Project:
**Mortimer Station
 Car Park**
 Client:
Jan 2020
 Drawing No:
455/3.7
 Date:
18/12/17



From Landscape Visual Impact Assessment.

Plan 3.7

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Planning Appeal Decisions

Committee: Eastern Area Planning Committee on 28th October 2020

Officer: Bob Dray, Team Leader (Development Control)

Recommendation: Note contents of this report

1. This reports summaries recent appeal decisions in the table below, and provides feedback on some of the key findings. The appeal decisions and associated documents can be viewed by searching by the application reference number on the Council's Public Access website: <https://publicaccess.westberks.gov.uk/online-applications/>

Application / Appeal	Site	LPA Decision	Appeal Decision	Decision Date
19/02735/HOUSE Appeal: 3246611 Written Reps	Laurel Cottage, Chapel Lane, Hermitage, Thatcham RG18 9RL Alterations and a two storey extension to the rear of Laurel Cottage.	Delegated refusal	Allowed	12/08/20
19/01804/FULD Appeal: 3245453 Written Reps	Walbury Cottage, Upper Green, Inkpen, Hungerford RG17 9QX New 4 bedroom detached dwelling with access road and hard standing area of parking.	Delegated refusal	Dismissed	25/08/20
19/02700/HOUSE Appeal: 3249861 Written Reps	Clifton House, Unnamed Road from Beckfords to Pangbourne Road, Upper Basildon, Reading RG8 8LU Amendments to 4 dormers (retrospective)	EAPC refusal (recommended approval)	Allowed	15/09/20
19/02915/HOUSE Appeal: 3251129 Written Reps	1 and 2 Church Street Mews, Church Street, Theale, Reading RG7 5BF Detached four bay garage to provide parking for 1 and 2 Church Street Mews with first floor annexe.	Delegated refusal	Dismissed	15/09/20
19/01826/HOUSE Appeal: 3251509 Written Reps	133 Halls Road, Tilehurst, Reading RG30 4QD New carport and store over existing parking spaces to the front garden of the existing property'.	Delegated refusal	Allowed	16/09/20
19/02950/HOUSE Appeal: 3251166 Written Reps	1 Weston Farm Cottages, Lambourn Road, Weston, Newbury RG20 8JA 3 bay garage with home office and storage rooms above	Delegated refusal	Dismissed	28/09/20
20/00708/HOUSE Appeal: 3255069 Written Reps	Greenhill Cottage, Hampstead Norreys, West Berkshire RG18 0TE Erection of first floor rear extension, erection of double	Delegated refusal	Dismissed	28/09/20

	storey side extension, and alterations to doors and windows.			
19/02426/LBC2 Appeal: 3245847 Written Reps	Hopgrass Open Barn, Stronggrove Hill, Bath Road, Hungerford RG17 0SJ Insertion of two windows to front elevation	Delegated refusal	Dismissed	28/09/20
20/00319/ADV Appeal: 3252407 Written Reps	Newbury Retail Park, Pinchington Lane, Newbury RG14 7HU Freestanding Lidl 'flag style' sign adjoining vehicular access into Newbury Retail Park off Pinchington Lane	Delegated refusal	Allowed	29/09/20
19/03076/OUTD Appeal: 3251987 Written Reps	Garage site adjacent to 1 The Village, Hamstead Marshall, Berkshire RG20 0HN Demolition of existing garages and erection of a two storey detached dwelling with three parking spaces	Delegated refusal	Allowed	01/10/20
20/00609/FUL Appeal: 3253638 Written Reps	Royal Berkshire Shooting School, Tomb Farm, Hook End Lane, Ashampstead, Reading RG8 8SD Eelocation of a marquee permitted to be erected up to 14 days per annum as per permission 142883	Delegated refusal	Allowed	07/10/20
19/01281/OUTMAJ Appeal: 3252212 Written Reps	Newspaper House and Units Q1-6, Plot Q, Faraday Road, Newbury RG14 2DW Demolition of existing Newspaper House and commercial buildings and redevelopment of the site for 71 flats and office accommodation together with parking and associated works	WAPC resolved to refuse (recommended for refusal)	Dismissed	08/10/20
20/00762/HOUSE Appeal: 3254826 Written Reps	Ogdown House, North Heath, Chieveley, Berkshire RG20 8UG Erection of an outbuilding.	Delegated refusal	Allowed	15/10/20
19/02878/HOUSE Appeal: 3253825 Written Reps	2 Lane End Cottages, Ermin Street, Woodlands St Mary, Berkshire RG17 7BH Demolition of the existing outbuilding and replacement outbuilding.	Delegated refusal	Dismissed	15/10/20

Housing in the countryside

- In **Walbury Cottage** the Inspector considered the criteria for infill development in Policy C1. They confirmed their interpretation that the wording of this policy is such that the insertion of the word “and” after each criterion does require that the proposal would need to comply with all the criteria; this is consistent with the Council’s interpretation. The Inspector disagreed with the Council’s interpretation that the site did not fall within a

“closely knit cluster of dwellings”, referring to the presence of existing residential dwellings to the north and east along the frontage of the road. The Inspector did, however, conclude that the proposal was not “infill” development as “infilling” would imply that the proposal would be located within a site which has development on either side of the plot, and that was not the case in respect of this appeal site. The appeal site is bounded by Walbury Cottage to the east, and the main road to the west. On this side of the main road, there is no additional development towards the south. As such the Inspector did not consider that the appeal site can be considered either infilling, or part of an otherwise built up frontage, due to the lack of existing development towards the south. Whilst the Inspector found the proposal complied with parts of Policy C1, these reasons rendered the proposal contrary to the policy as a whole.



3. The **garage site adjacent to 1 The Village, Hamstead Marshall** was another proposal for infill residential development. In this case the Council agreed that the site was located within a closely knit cluster of 10+ dwellings, but considered that the proposal conflicts with the other criteria of Policy C1. Regard was also given to a historical refusal.
4. Criterion (ii) requires that *“the scale of development consists of infilling a small undeveloped plot commensurate with the scale and character of existing dwellings within an otherwise built up frontage.”* The Inspector commented that this policy criterion does include reference to ‘undeveloped plots’ which the appeal site is not, being that there is an area of hardstanding and garages/outbuildings present. Nonetheless, considering the aim of the policy is to ensure against harm to the existing relationship between a settlement and the open countryside, amongst other things, it was the Inspector’s view that it is not the intention of this policy to prevent all infill development on previously developed plots.
5. In terms of criterion (iii) and whether it would “extend an existing frontage”, the Inspector noted that the site is set within the existing established row of dwellings. It is not to the side of the row, which would then extend it into the countryside if further dwellings were added. The proposed house would have a more noticeable frontage than the existing garages, but they would not regard this as being a case of a development which ‘extends’ the existing street frontage.



Self build housing

6. In **Walbury Cottage** the Inspector recognised that the appellant is registered on the Self Build Register, and the proposal would be a self-built dwelling. They commented that the provision of a single self-build property would contribute to the needs of the self-building sector, and that this was something which they attached weight to in favour of the proposals. However, this benefit did not outweigh the harm that was identified in respect of the location of the development and conflict with the development plan.

Flood risk sequential test (Newspaper House – WAPC)

7. The focus of the **Newspaper House** decision was on the flood risk sequential test (ST), which is a requirement of the NPPF and Core Strategy. The aim of the ST is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding. If the ST is passed a proposal is also required to pass the Exception Test, which is also necessary for the development to be considered acceptable in this regard. In essence, development should only be permitted in an area of higher flood risk if there are no suitable alternative sites available in an area of lower flood risk. A ST therefore examines the availability of alternative sites within a defined search area.
8. In this case the proposal was for both apartments and office accommodation at a site near the centre of Newbury where there are existing offices. The site is within close proximity to the River Kennet and is, at least in part, within Flood Zone 3 according to the Environment Agency (EA). Although in Flood Zone 3 the area does benefit from flood defences. Flood Zone 3 (FZ3) is an area of high probability flooding. The appellant submitted both a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and also 'Sequential Tests' (ST) to support the proposal. The Council disputed the conclusions of the ST, the methods and the search criteria used by the appellant.
9. The appeal decision considers many detailed points, which will be a helpful reference for the future application of the sequential test in West Berkshire. However some key points include:
 - a) **The search area should not be limited to the appeal site.** The Inspector recognised numerous benefits of the proposed scheme, but was not persuaded that this means that the ST search area should not be beyond the appeal site, which despite the benefits is in this high risk flood area.

- b) **The search area should take in other settlements within West Berkshire.** The appellant only considered sites within the Newbury town area of the HELAA. However, the Inspector concluded that the search area should be set significantly wider, taking in the settlements of the District of West Berkshire which is covered by the Council's housing policies. Such policies are permissive for housing in urban areas, rural service centres, and service villages of the District to varying degrees. Furthermore, the Inspector also noted that Newbury is not the only urban area listed under policy ADPP1, which also includes Thatcham, and Eastern Urban Area, although it is possible that there may be sites available which could accommodate a development of the scale proposed in this appeal in one of the more rural settlements in the District. Furthermore, Newbury is considered within policy CS11 as a major town centre and that as a main urban area this will be one of the areas which will be the focus for development. However, this is not primarily a housing policy and also other settlements are mentioned (albeit smaller settlements than Newbury). Policy CS4 allows for higher densities elsewhere in the district.
- c) **Rejected discounting of alternative sites in Flood Zone 2.** On the evidence the Inspector could not conclude that the site was not, at least in part, within Flood Zone 3. As such they determined that any alternative sites in Flood Zone 2 should not be discounted as they are preferable to appeal site for residential development.
- d) **Rejected discounting of sites for minor development.** The Inspector rejected the discounting of all alternative sites that would not support a major housing development on the basis that they would not provide affordable housing.
10. The appellant contended that there are no sequentially preferable sites within Newbury from their analysis, but the Inspector considered there was no evidence before them that clearly sets out that the proposed development could not be accommodated on a sequentially preferable site in a settlement within the District other than within Newbury. In view of the seriousness of the consequences of flooding the Inspector concluded they were not satisfied that the sequential test had been passed. As such the exception test does not need to be considered in these circumstances.
11. In the final planning balance, the Inspector recognised the proposal would bring some significant benefits. However, the site was within Flood Zone 3 (albeit with flood defences) and flooding can result in severe consequences especially for those living in such areas if a flood event occurs, to which there is a notable probability for this site. Therefore, considering all the circumstances, the harm significantly and demonstrably outweighs the benefits of the scheme.

Duties to protect designated heritage and landscape areas

12. There are a number of statutory duties imposed on decision makers which require particular regard to be given to certain designations. Depending on the circumstances of any given case, these duties can set some considerations apart in importance from other planning considerations.
13. **Greenhill Cottage** is a modest two storey detached cottage, of traditional design, located within the Hampstead Norreys Conservation Area. The appeal decision provides a reminder of the statutory duty in Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that requires the decision maker to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas.

14. In **1 and 2 Church Street Mews**, a detached four bay garage was dismissed due, in part, to its impact on the adjacent Lambfields Conservation Area. In doing so the Inspector commented that whilst there is no explicit statutory duty in respect of the setting of a conservation area the Framework is clear that the setting of a heritage asset can contribute to its significance. The setting of a heritage asset is not a fixed concept; it is concerned with the way the heritage asset is experienced. Paragraph 193 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, such as Conservation Areas, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
15. The **Greenhill Cottage** decision also makes reference to the statutory duty in Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This requires that a decision maker has regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of AONB's. Furthermore, Paragraph 172 of the Framework specifies that great weight must be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty of these areas.

Advertisement consent

16. The decision at **Newbury Retail Park** provides a reminder that the Advertisement Regulations limit control of advertisements to the interests of amenity and public safety. In this instance concern was also raised regarding the need for the proposed sign given the existing adjacent sign serving the retail park. The Inspector could not take into account whether a need was demonstrated.

Clifton House (EAPC)

17. This application sought retrospective permission for four dormer windows, subject to some proposed minor amendments. EAPC were concerned with the character and appearance of the dormers, and with the impact on neighbouring living conditions, and thus refused the application. In terms of the first issue, the Inspector commented on the variety in form, scale and character of local buildings, but recognised that the appeal property shares a form, scale and vernacular with the neighbouring house. The Inspector said long distance views of the appeal site were limited by surrounding built development, nevertheless, the appeal property is an important part of the rural village environment which is one of the special qualities of the AONB.
18. The Inspector identified that the neighbouring property, which is similar in design, exhibits a dormer windows. They accepted the principle of dormer windows on the property. Overall the Inspector concluded the windows would complement the form, scale and architectural expression of the existing property, and thus would not appear unduly overbearing or incongruous in character. They made the following detailed comments on design:
- They would be set down from the ridge line and would occupy a modest area of the roof space.
 - Their size would respect the size of the windows elsewhere on the property; small in scale to complement their position on the roof and not dwarf the windows at ground and first floor level.
 - The size and design of the glazing would respect the size and design of existing glazing.
 - The cills of dormers 2 and 3 would be directly above the apex of the gable below. Whilst this appears as a slightly awkward and cramped juxtaposition, it does not detract from the overall form, scale and appearance of the appeal dwelling to be considered harmful to its character and appearance.

19. The Inspector also examined the relationship of each dormer to neighbouring properties. They concluded that overlooking from the windows was no more harmful than the overlooking that exists from first floor windows, or could be sufficiently mitigated by obscure glazing.
20. Recognising the ongoing breach of planning with the dormers in their current form, the Inspector reduced the time limit for implementation to 12 months.

Other decisions

21. A number of other householder or minor appeal decisions have also been received and listed in the table above, but which do not raise any issues of general interest. These include:
 - Laurel Cottage, 133 Halls Road, 1 Weston Farm Cottages, Ogdow House, 2 Lane End Cottages – site specific consideration of character and appearance, amenity and/or access issues.
 - Hopgrass Open Barn, Royal Berkshire Shooting School – site specific impacts on listed buildings.

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