

**EASTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE  
11<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2022**

**UPDATE REPORT**

**Item No:** 4(2)      **Application No:** 21/02130/OUTMAJ      **Page No.** 59 – 99

**Site:** Land adjacent to 1 Gables Way, Bath Road, Colthrop, Thatcham

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**Planning Officer Presenting:** Michael Butler

**Member Presenting:** N/A

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**Parish Representative speaking:** Cllr Anthony Fenn, Midgham Parish Council – in person

**Adjacent Parish Representative speaking:** Cllr Steve Ardagh-Walter and Cllr Owen Jeffery, Thatcham Town Council – in person

**Objector(s) speaking:** Ms Tracey Underwood – in person

**Supporter(s) speaking:** N/A

**Applicant/Agent speaking:** Mr James Walker, Savills (agent) – via Zoom

**Ward Member(s):** Cllr Graham Pask

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**1. Additional Consultation Responses**

<b>Public representations:</b>	<p>Two additional letters of strong objections have been received from adjacent ward members in Thatcham, and a further letter of objection from a parish councillor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concern was raised about the increase in traffic that will arise and the impact on HGV traffic through the centre of Thatcham, to the M4 and beyond.</li><li>• Concern was also raised about the inappropriate type of jobs which may be created by the scheme and which are not needed.</li><li>• There is a need for hi-tech jobs in this location.</li><li>• Lack of active travel improvements in relation to the scheme.</li><li>• Conflict with the Local Transport Plan.</li><li>• Lack of need for more large B8 units.</li><li>• Does not comply with local policy, the Council's Employment Land Review, or the Western Berkshire FEMA Economic Development Needs Assessment.</li></ul>
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## 2. Response to Additional Representations

The Highway Officer has advised that a link directly into the existing cycleway to the west on the south side of the A4 was considered but in order to achieve this the highway would need to be widened further, in which no land was available. The non-provision of 160m length of cycleway is not considered sufficient reason to object to the application. In addition, if this provision was to occur it would have a detrimental impact on adjacent trees and biodiversity.

With respect to need, the 2020 Employment Land Review is the most up-to-date evidence. This identifies a need for 62,000m<sup>2</sup> over the 16 year period of 2020 to 2036 for industrial floorspace (including B2 and B8); the equivalent of some 16 hectares and approximately 500 jobs in B8 alone. The application site is identified in the report as having high market attraction and good availability. Whilst the ELR notes that the “best” sites are close to the M4 junction, there remains good demand and need for other sites across the district. Given the high level of constraints across the district for such new employment sites, the application site is considered appropriate.

The ELR notes that currently vacancy rates, particularly for B2 and B8 units in the Colthrop area, are low (7.5% is normal market churn rate), and demand for good space remains high. In addition Paragraph 82(a) of the NPPF encourages local planning authorities to set out a clear economic vision and strategy for positively and proactively promoting sustainable economic growth, having regard to local industrial strategies. It is considered that approving this application would be in accordance with the NPPF.

In addition the applicant has accepted a condition to secure a Skills and Employment Plan, as identified below, which will assist in the promotion of lower skilled jobs at the site, and during the construction phase.

## 3. Additional Information

At the Committee site visit a number of information requests were made as follows.

Approximate distances to nearest dwellings (from application red line site at closest point):

- 39 Midgham Marsh – 244m to the east (northernmost)
- 38 Midgham Marsh – 290m to the east (southernmost)
- Meadow Thatch Cottage – 390m to the east
- West Grange Hotel – 132m to the north
- The Croft, Coxs Lane – 190m to the north

Neighbouring heights:

- The highest point of 2 Gables Way (immediate west of the application site) is 13.5m.
- The highest point of the Xtrac building (further to the west) is 10m.
- The highest point of Units 1, 2 and 3 Thatcham Distribution Park (next west) is 12.5m.

There are several tree preservation orders within the woodland belt to the west of the application site. No works are proposed within the vicinity of these TPOs.

## 4. Conditions

Following further discussions with the applicant, some minor amendments to the recommended conditions have been agreed as follows:

- The submitted drainage and parking plans have been omitted from Condition 4 (approved plans) as these are indicative.
- Condition 5 (water supply) can be deleted as Thames Water have now confirmed no objections to the application.

- Condition 17 has been amended to ensure visibility splays are provided before first occupation rather than before any development. This is because a temporary construction access would be governed separately by Condition 8 (CMS).
- Condition 22 has been amended to a pre-occupation condition, rather than pre-commencement.

Three additional conditions are also recommended to secure BREEAM, carbon reduction, and a Skills and Employment Plan.

## 5. Updated Recommendation

The recommendation remains as set out in the agenda committee report, subject to the following additional/amended conditions.

### 4. **Approved plans (amended)**

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans/documents:

668-004-PLO7 (Parameter Plan);  
1909-11-PLO3-A (Junction access scheme);  
668-001-PLO2 (Location Plan).

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

5. **Condition 5 (water supply) is deleted** because Thames Water have confirmed no objections to the application.

### 17. **Visibility splays (amended)**

No unit shall be first occupied until visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 160 metres have been provided at the access. The visibility splays shall, thereafter, be kept free of all obstructions to visibility above a height of 0.6 metres above carriageway level.

Reason: In the interests of road safety. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026). Note: Temporary construction access is governed by Condition 8 (CMS)

### 22. **Travel Plan (amended)**

No unit shall be first occupied until a Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan shall be implemented from the development first being brought into use. It shall be reviewed, and updated as appropriate, within 6 months of first implementation, in agreement with the Local Planning Authority. After that the Travel Plan shall be annually reviewed and updated as appropriate and all reasonable practicable steps made to achieve the agreed targets and measures within the timescales set out in the plan and any subsequent revisions.

Reason: To ensure the development reduces reliance on private motor vehicles and provides the appropriate level of vehicle parking. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

### 23. **BREEAM (additional)**

The development hereby permitted shall achieve a rating of "Excellent" under BREEAM (or any such equivalent national measure of sustainable building which replaces that scheme), unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be first occupied until a final certificate has been

issued certifying that this rating has been achieved, and a copy of the certificate has been provided to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the development contributes to sustainable construction. This condition is applied 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).

24. **Sustainability and Energy Strategy (additional)**

On or before the submission of the first reserved matters application, relating to any or all of the reserved matters for each phase of the development, a detailed Sustainability and Energy Statement shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The Statement shall:

- (a) Be informed by the Sustainability Statement and Energy Strategy accompanying the outline application; and
- (b) Include a scheme for the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions, including through the use of low/zero carbon technology, with an aspiration to achieve zero carbon in accordance with Policy CS15.

No development within each phase of the development shall take place until approval of the above Statement has been granted in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development within each phase shall be implemented in full accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the development contributes towards the transition to a low carbon future. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policy CS15 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026. A pre-commencement condition is required because the final measures contained within the statement may influence site layout and construction.

25. **Skills and Employment Plan (additional)**

No development shall take place an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP), in relation to the construction phase of the development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The ESP will set out the measures that the developer will take to enhance the training and employment opportunities that are offered to the local workforce in West Berkshire in the construction process. The measures set out in the ESP should be appropriate and proportional to the scale and value of the development. The ESP should set out, through a method statement, how the following priorities will be addressed:

- (a) Promotion of employment opportunities generated on site to the West Berkshire workforce (but not excluding those outside of West Berkshire), with a focus on those who are not currently employed.
- (b) Creation of new apprenticeship starts specific to the development site. This should include how the developer will work directly with local employment and training agencies.
- (c) Identification of training and work placement opportunities on site with discussion on how these may be promoted to local people, working directly with local employment and training agencies.

The Employment and Skills Plan should also:

- (d) Identify a lead contact who is responsible for managing the plan.
- (e) Set out a timetable for the implementation of the ESP which, for the avoidance of doubt, shall include a start date no later than the date of commencement of development.

- (f) Set out the process for how implementation of the ESP will be monitored and reported back to West Berkshire Council.

Thereafter approved ESP shall be implemented in full concurrent with the development of the site.

Reason: To promote local job opportunities in the district in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. A pre-commencement condition is necessary because the ESP will need to be in place before any construction activities take place.