

# DRAFT

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## EASTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2019

**Councillors Present:** Peter Argyle, Jeremy Cottam, Alan Law (Chairman), Royce Longton, Alan Macro, Geoff Mayes, Graham Pask, Joanne Stewart and Andrew Williamson

**Also Present:** Jessica Bailiss (Policy Officer (Executive Support)), Bob Dray (Development Control Team Leader), Paul Goddard (Team Leader - Highways Development Control) and Sarah Melton (Senior Planning Officer)

#### PART I

#### 23. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:

Item 19/01038/FULD – Land Adjacent to 1A King Street, Mortimer Common, Page 29, final paragraph: To read Councillor Joanne Stewart.

#### 24. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Graham Pask declared an interest in Agenda Item 4(1), but reported that, as his interest was a personal or an other registrable interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

#### 25. Schedule of Planning Applications

##### (1) Application No. & Parish: 18/02472/FUL - Bradfield Village Hall, Southend Road, Bradfield, Southend, Reading

*(Councillor Graham Pask declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 4(1) by virtue of the fact that he had been Ward Member for Bradfield and had received emails from people who supported and objected to the application. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial or a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.)*

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(1)) concerning Planning Application 18/02472/FUL in respect of the demolition of existing village hall and garages and construction of new village hall (D1/D2 mixed use) and associated parking and access, removal of existing recreational facilities, creation of new multi-games area, relocation of children's play area, new boundary treatment, landscaping and ancillary works.

Mr Bob Dray, Team Leader – Development Control, introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- There had been a total of 107 letters of objection to the application and 82 letters of support.
- Two previous applications for the site had been refused due to design concerns, loss of open space and the cumulative impact that would have been caused.

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- One of the previous applications was for four dwellings alongside a replacement hall. These dwellings had been removed from the current proposals.
- Plans of the site showed the previous scheme in yellow against the current scheme, which had been placed further back into the site.
- The site would provide a series of benefits including modern replacement facilities.
- Parking spaces on the site would increase from 26 to 71 if the application was approved.
- The footway to the front of the site would be increased in width to 1.5 metres.
- There would be a loss of open space to the rear of the site if the application was approved and this was a key consideration.
- Sport England had been consulted on the application and paragraph 6.20 onwards of the report detailed a series of negotiations. Sports England had concluded that the scheme was acceptable and now raised no technical objections.
- The village hall would be built in a Dutch barn style, which had received objections. This style had been chosen because it helped to keep the height of the building down and was considered to suit the rural location. It was acknowledged that some harm would be caused by the substantive building if approved.
- The application was considered to be on balance as it had benefits and adverse effects.
- Having taken account of all the relevant planning policy considerations and other material considerations, it was considered that the application complied with the development plan when considered as a whole, and therefore approval of the application was recommended.
- The Update Report included five further letters of objections and clarified a number of matters that had been raised at the site visit regarding phasing, the construction management plan, storage sheds, building heights, alternative proposals suggested by third parties and existing tennis courts/MUGA.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Andrew House, Parish Council representative, Jonathan Alderman, Giles Allen and Michael Mee, objectors, William Rowntree and Ken Littlechild, supporters, Christine Evans, applicant and Councillor Ross Mackinnon, Ward Member, addressed the Committee on this application.

### **Parish Council Representation:**

Mr House in addressing the Committee raised the following points:

- He was the Chairman of Bradfield Parish Council, which objected to the application.
- Bradfield sat within the south east of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NWDONB).
- The application was often referred to as a the 'local marmite project' as it had divided the community.
- A previous application in 2017 had been refused.
- The Parish Council had objected to the current application with a five to four majority split.

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- The Parish Council were objecting to the application for a number of reasons including loss of green space and the position of the hall on the site.
- The Parish Council objected to re-locating the children's play areas as part of the plans, as it would be less overlooked.
- The layout and design of the site would encourage increased anti-social behaviour (ASB) and raised safety concerns.
- The Parish Council was concerned about the overall excessive size of the hall building particularly the foyer area.
- In the view of the Parish Council the proposed village hall did not sit well in the planned location in the development plan.

### **Member Questions to the Parish Council:**

Councillor Graham Pask noted the Parish Council's concerns about the children's play area. Currently this facility was positioned to the front of the site and this had caused safety concerns due to traffic issues when accessing the area. He queried why Mr House felt the area would be unsafe if positioned further back on the site. Mr House stated that the current play area could be seen from the road. The new proposed location was acceptable in that those using the park would not have to walk through traffic however, it would be shielded by the proposed village hall building and therefore less visible. There was concern that this could cause an element of ASB.

Councillor Alan Law referred to the comment from Mr House regarding the Parish Council's majority split on the application and asked him to further clarify this point. Mr House stated that the Parish Council had objected to the 2017 application, with a four to three majority. The Parish Council had objected to the revised current with a five to four majority split.

### **Objector Representations:**

Mr Jonathan Alderman, Mr Giles Allen and Mr Michael Mee in addressing the Committee raised the following points:

- Mr Alderman stated that a social media campaign against the proposal had gained 100 followers.
- It was not felt that the proposal was a sustainable development.
- The proposal contradicted the NPPF and CS18.
- There were a number of crucial issues that needed to be considered:
  - 1) The size of proposal and why it needed to be so big. The report concluded that the proposed building was substantive. It was two and half times the size of the original building. Other areas such as Hermitage, had developed smaller village halls. The proposal was too large for the local area.
  - 2) The location of the hall. Mr Alderman queried why the proposal needed to be sited on the green area of the site, which would cause a loss of green space. He understood that as part of the previous application the building had been placed back 35 metres on the site to lessen the visual impact of the 10m ridge height. The new ridge height of 8.6m allowed the building to be 25 metres further forward on the site.
  - 3) A business plan for the scheme had not been provided and therefore there was no proof that there was demand for such a facility in the local area. The

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suggestion was that the hall would benefit community groups however, there was fear that it would become a traffic magnet.

4) Environmental harm. The application was contrary to policy CS19 and would have an eroding impact on the village, if approved. In Mr Alderman's view, in the fast moving economical/technological climate green space was at a premium and needed protecting. There was fear that approval of the application would lead to further applications which would require acceptances contrary to policy CS18.

- Mr Alderman pleaded that if the Committee were minded to approve the application then it take action to mitigate some of the concerns raised using conditions. If the application was refused there were more appropriate ideas for the site.

### **Member Questions to the Objector:**

Councillor Pask queried how much larger the village hall at Hermitage was than the proposed scheme. Mr Allen confirmed that the footprint of Hermitage Village Hall was 520m<sup>2</sup> and the footprint for the proposed scheme was 570m<sup>2</sup>. The proposed footprint was bigger than any other village hall that could be found in the area.

### **Supporter Representations:**

Mr William Rowntree and Mr Ken Littlechild in addressing the Committee raised the following points:

- Mr Rowntree referred to objections to the hall that claimed it was too high. Mr Rowntree stated that when looking at the height of adjacent properties it could be seen that this was not the case.
- If viewing the current hall from South End Road, a person needed to raise their vision ten degrees upwards when looking at the highest point of the current hall. For the new scheme vision would only need to be raised seven degrees from the same position. Therefore height was not a consideration in Mr Rowntree's view.
- Mr Rowntree was part of the Village Shop Committee, which had been promised a storage area for some time. The proposed scheme would provide this.
- The current hall had been on the site for 60 years. It needed to be replaced with a new hall that could serve another 60 years.
- The footpath as part of the proposed design was safe for everyone including children.
- The new hall would be economical, easy to maintain and could be used by various groups.
- Mr Littlechild referred to the point made by Mr Rowntree regarding the current village hall being 60 years old. When the hall had been built, society had been very different. On a Sunday people had gone to church and car usage had been very minimal. At the time the current village hall was built, it had been a very fine hall however, it was now inadequate. Therefore a hall needed to be built like it had been 60 years ago, that would meet the needs to future generations for another 60 years.
- The proposed village hall would be a wonderful facility that would provide a social centre.

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- Currently a lot of organisations used facilities outside of the village but the proposed scheme would mean that they could return to the village.
- Mr Littlechild asked that the Committee support the application.

### **Member Questions to the Supporters:**

Councillor Andrew Williamson referred to the storage area mentioned for use by the village shop and queried what this storage space would be used for. Mr Rowntree confirmed that it would provide storage for documentation that had to be held by the Post Office for several years.

Councillor Alan Macro noted that it had been stated that the hall would be more economical however, the report detailed that only BREEAM 'Good' had been awarded. Mr Rowntree was unable to comment on this point but stated that it would be an insulated modern building and therefore more economical. Councillor Macro stated that he would ask the agent to confirm the BREEAM point later in the proceedings.

### **Agent's Representations:**

Christine Evans' in addressing the Committee raised the following points:

- The village hall was built on land given to the community in 1941. The hall had seen many community events over the years including Women's Institute events and ballet.
- The plans before Members represented seven years of hard work and planning. Consultation has been carried out with users of the site. Other village halls had been visited as part of the process to learn about successes and failures.
- Over the years, plans for the site had evolved. Some changes to the scheme had not been viewed favourably but had been accepted. The proposal for housing on the site had been removed. Highways requirements could now be met.
- Ms Evans stated that the aim was to make the site as safe as possible removing any conflict between pedestrians and cars.
- Regarding the open space there would still be 160m<sup>2</sup> to the rear of the proposed building, which backed onto Hedge Copse Lane.
- It was felt that the current scheme best satisfied criteria. Every effort had been made to minimise the impact however, it was impossible to please everybody.
- The facility would meet the needs of the 21st Century.
- The car park would provide parking for users of the village shop, parents dropping and collecting children from school, the mobile library and a space for the local bus service to turn around safely.
- Ms Evans referred to the multi games area (MUGA) that would be provided as part of the scheme along with the improved footpath.
- Facilities would encourage exercise and aid mental health via recreational activities.
- The scheme would be unique and for everyone to use. It would play a vital part in the community to help minimise social isolation.

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### **Member Questions to the Agent:**

Councillor Royce Longton asked who owned the site and Ms Evans confirmed that it had been owned by the Bradfield Village Hall Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) since 1941.

Councillor Macro questioned Ms Evans regarding the BREEAM rating of 'Good'. Ms Evans stated that reaching BREEAM 'Excellent' included meeting a number of regulations that were expensive to reach. This would have caused excessive financial burden with little benefit. Reaching BREEAM 'Good' had been negotiated with Planning Officers early in the application process.

Councillor Jeremy Cottam asked what the open green space was currently used for. Ms Evans confirmed that this was used for dog training or kicking a football around. It was confirmed that the area was not a formal football pitch. Ms Evans stated that the land the proposed village hall would be built on had not been used for sport in the time she had known it.

Councillor Pask referred to the MUGA and safety concerns raised by the Parish Council and asked if Ms Evan's had any comments. Ms Evans stated that if walking along South East Road, the current play area could not be seen because of a hedge. Other villages had taken the advice to move play areas away from roads. Pedestrians walked across the field regularly and therefore there was little risk regarding ASB in Ms Evan's view.

Councillor Geoff Mayes asked if Bradfield Village Hall CIO had all the funding it needed to complete the project. Ms Evan's stated that they did not yet have the total amount required however, a six figure sum would be awarded to the scheme if planning approval was given.

Councillor Pask further queried the parking situation and use of the car park. Ms Evans stated that the local school had no on-site parking and therefore vehicles parked along Hedge Copse Lane. The school had asked if it could utilise the car park if approval was given during school drop off and pick up times. Regarding the bus service, West Berkshire Council had put a new bus service in place in the village, which would be able to turnaround in the car park if approval was given. The current car park was too small for this purpose.

Councillor Williamson queried the increase in the number of car parking spaces for the village hall to 63. Ms Evans confirmed that this number had been requested by the Highways Department. Eight of these had been allocated to the village shop and ten had been required for overflow parking. Councillor Williamson queried if the parking was the reason why the proposed village hall had been positioned 20m further forward on the site. Ms Evan's reported that the garden area could have been used for car parking however, they had wanted to preserve this area.

Councillor Law referred to the point made by the objectors that there was no plan to use all of the space planned for and asked Ms Evan's to comment on this point. Ms Evans stated that there was no reason to believe that the hall would not be fully utilised. The current hall was not used because space was limited. The proposed village hall would mean the space could be used by the after school club, whilst allowing the rest of the building to be used by other groups. The committee room could be used for ad-hoc events including polling activity, when the others halls were in use.

### **Ward Member Representation:**

Councillor Ross Mackinnon in addressing the Committee raised the following points:

- He had been a West Berkshire Council Member since May 2019 and had inherited the area from Councillors Pask and Quentin Webb.

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- He wanted to give an overview of the thoughts of the village on the application. As the Committee had heard the community and Parish Council was split on the application.
- There was agreement overall that a new village hall was required as the current one was in a state of disrepair. The current trustees were having to spend a lot of money to maintain it.
- Both objectors and supporters had given an informative presentation of the community's views. Councillor Mackinnon stated that it could be seen from the Planning Officer's report that the application was balanced. The proposal was for a larger hall however, on the other hand there were other buildings in the area of a similar size. There would be a loss of green space however, better facilities would be provided including a MUGA. There were genuine reasons for and against the application.
- Whatever the Committee decided Councillor Mackinnon hoped that the village accepted it in good grace. Councillor Mackinnon looked forward to hearing the Committee's debate on the application.

### **Member Questions to the Officers:**

Councillor Pask asked Mr Dray to clarify points raised about BREEAM. Mr Dray explained that policy requested BREEAM 'Excellent' however, this had been explored as part of the previous application and was not reachable. Therefore a BREEAM rating of 'Good' was deemed acceptable. The nature of the building had to be taken into consideration and Officers were satisfied in this case that BREEAM 'Good' was acceptable.

Councillor Mayes queried the roof of the building and if there would be glazing and velux windows. He further queried if this could cause a disadvantage regarding heating loss. Mr Dray noted the point however, stated that he would be surprised if it would hold the application back from achieving BREEAM 'Excellent'. Councillor Law added the inability to reach BREEAM 'Excellent' was normally finance related.

Councillor Macro referred to section 1.12 of the report and queried if there would be two children's play areas. Mr Dray identified the two areas on the plan of the site and stated that conditions would be used to agree the detailed design if approved.

Councillor Cottam queried safety implications if plans were approved particularly around parking. Mr Paul Goddard, Highways Officer, concurred with comments that highways safety on the site would be improved. The footways within the site and the footway fronting the site would also be widened to 1.5m if the application was approved.

Councillor Williamson asked Mr Goddard to clarify the Highway Department's request for further car parking spaces on the site. Mr Goddard confirmed that Officers had tried to find a balance regarding the size of the new hall and the number of car parking spaces that would be required. Parking standards were currently outdated and required one car parking space per five squares metres of (village hall) space, which equated to 102 car parking spaces. If this was applied to the usable hall space then it equated to 63 car parking spaces. Mr Goddard stated that if the application went to Appeal, it was felt that this number could be defended.

Mr Dray added that the existing uses were judged to constitute a mixed D1 and D2 use, and so a degree of professional judgement was required on determine the appropriate parking level. Mr Goddard commented that there was no car parking standard for D1 use, only for D2 use. Councillor Williamson noted that the size of the building therefore

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determined the number of car parking spaces and was the reason why the building was being pushed back into the site.

Councillor Law referred to the overflow car parking and queried if parking was only permitted at certain times of the year. Mr Dray stated that this was getting confused with permitted development rights for temporary uses. He added that there was a condition regarding the overflow parking, which could only be used when the main parking facility was at full capacity or when special events were taking place.

Councillor Macro had noted that the position of the proposed scheme would mean the existing hall could remain whilst the new hall was constructed. He queried if the existing hall would not be demolished until the new building was built. Mr Dray stated that there was a new condition within the Update Report regarding phasing of the development and demolition. It was possible that the existing hall could remain whilst the new hall was built as it was on a different footprint. A condition was recommended for phased implementation. This would agree a timetable for construction so that the existing building was not retained for too long.

Councillor Law noted that Officers stated that the scheme was not 'finely balanced'. This was a term that had not been used before. Mr Dray stated that the application was 'balanced' in the sense that there were both benefits and adverse effects of granting permission but, in this instance, Officers considered that the benefits comfortably outweighed the adverse effects, hence it was not considered by Officers to be 'finely balanced'.

### **Debate:**

Councillor Pask stated that as the former Ward Member for Bradfield he was aware of the discussions that had taken place over the last four to five years regarding the site. He felt that the Chairman of the Parish Council had perfectly described the application when he had referred to it as 'marmite'. A judgement however, needed to be made based on planning considerations. Everyone agreed that a change was required to the village hall in its current state and a decision needed to be made on the application. Four houses had formed part of the previous application, to help provide funding for the village hall however, there had been concern raised about encroachment onto the village road through Bradfield.

Councillor Pask commented on the loss of green space that would result from the application being approved for events such as the May Fair however, the proposed car park area could be used for such events. Councillor Pask was also mindful that the population was only going to grow and therefore there would be increased pressure for more facilities. Both Hermitage and Basildon had excellent village halls that were either replacements or refurbishments. If planning permission was granted, Councillor Pask stated that this would open the door to grant funding for the hall and he referred to the six figure sum that had been mentioned.

Councillor Pask commented on the modern facilities that would be provided as part of the hall. He understood the reason for polarised opinions about the application however, in his view the current application had taken into account all issues raised through previous applications. Councillor Pask was therefore minded to support the application.

Councillor Williamson struggled to see a justification for the increase of 43 parking spaces. He felt that this could encourage car use in the area rather than reduce it. He was conscious of the loss of green space. He concurred that the proposal would offer a fantastic facility for future generations to use however, the parking that encroached onto the green space caused him concern. In his view it would have been better to move the village hall forward to retain some of the green space.



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Councillor Cottam concurred with the views raised by Councillor Pask. The Bradfield Village Hall CIO were responsible for managing the hall and were confident it would be utilised. The current hall was out of date and dilapidated and was no longer fit for purpose. In Councillor Cottam's view it needed updating. He felt that the proposal would improve safety on the site particularly for young children. There would be adequate space for the May Fair Event if the application was approved.

Councillor Macro referred to comments by Councillor Williamson about the size of the car park and stated that although there was a climate emergency, unfortunately reduced car parking did not normally deter people from using their cars. If there was concern regarding the impact environmentally, Councillor Macro suggested that electric charging points would be a better solution.

Councillor Joanne Stewart referred to the mixed use of the space, which sounded inclusive. Thought had been given for disabled users. Councillor Stewart noted that Mr Littlechild had described how the village hall would be used as a community space and in her mind this was exactly what it should be used for. Regarding the environmental issues, Councillor Stewart felt that solar panels could be considered. The community could potentially be divisive for years to come however Councillor Stewart was pleased to hear it was being planned for.

Councillor Longton proposed that Members support the Officer recommendation to grant planning permission. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Pask.

The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Longton, seconded by Councillor Pask. At the vote the motion was carried.

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

### **Conditions**

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 following approved plans:

- BVH Site Plan 030719
- BVH\_173.04 Proposed Roof plan
- BVH\_174.06 Proposed Elevation (street elevation)
- BVH\_175.06 Proposed Elevation (from field)
- BVH\_176.06 Proposed Elevation (towards children's play area)
- BVH\_177.05 Proposed (towards the village store)
- BVH\_172.08 Proposed Ground and first floor plan
- BVH\_180.10 Proposed Site plan.

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- BVH\_179.04 Proposed Site sections

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

### 3. Setting Back of Gates

Any gates to be provided at the vehicular access into the site shall be set back at a minimum distance of 5 metres from the edge of the adopted highway and shall open inwards (into the site).

Reason: In the interest of road safety and to ensure that vehicles can be driven off the highway before the gates are open. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

### 4. Visibility Splays

No development hereby permitted shall take place until visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 43 metres have been provided at the vehicular access to the site from Southend Road. The land within these visibility splays shall thereafter be kept free of all obstructions to visibility over a height of 0.6 metres above the carriageway level.

Reason: In the interests of road safety. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026). A pre-commencement condition is required because safe access/egress must be provided before any development takes place.

### 5. Parking and Turning Areas

The village hall hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the vehicle parking and turning spaces have been surfaced, marked out and provided in accordance with the approved plans. The parking and turning spaces shall thereafter be kept available for parking (of private motor cars and/or light goods vehicles) at all times.

Reason: To ensure the development is provided with adequate parking facilities, in order to reduce the likelihood of roadside parking that would adversely affect road safety and the flow of traffic. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Policy P1 of the Housing Site Allocations DPD (2006-2026) and Policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

### 6. Cycle parking

The village hall hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the cycle parking has been provided in accordance with the approved drawings and this area shall thereafter be kept available for the parking of cycles at all times.

Reason: To ensure the development reduces reliance on private motor vehicles and assists with the parking, storage and security of cycles. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

### 7. Sustainable Drainage

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No development hereby permitted shall take place until details of sustainable drainage measures to manage surface water within the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall:

- a) Incorporate the implementation of Sustainable Drainage methods (SuDS) in accordance with the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for SuDS (March 2015), the SuDS Manual C753 (2015) and West Berkshire Council local standards, particularly the WBC SuDS Supplementary Planning Document December 2018;
- b) Include and be informed by a ground investigation survey which establishes the soil characteristics, infiltration rate and groundwater levels;
- c) Include attenuation measures to retain rainfall run-off within the site, off site discharge will not be permitted;
- d) Include construction drawings, cross-sections and specifications of all proposed SuDS measures within the site;
- e) Include run-off calculations, discharge rates, infiltration and storage capacity calculations for the proposed SuDS measures based on a 1 in 100 year storm +40% for climate change;
- f) Include pre-treatment methods to prevent any pollution or silt entering SuDS features or causing any contamination to the soil or groundwater;
- g) Ensure any permeable paved areas are designed and constructed in accordance with manufacturers guidelines;
- h) Include a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development. This plan shall incorporate arrangements for adoption by an appropriate public body or statutory undertaker, management and maintenance by a residents' management company or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage scheme throughout its lifetime.

The development shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that surface water will be managed in a sustainable manner; to prevent the increased risk of flooding; to improve and protect water quality, habitat and amenity and ensure future maintenance of the surface water drainage system can be, and is carried out in an appropriate and efficient manner. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), Policy CS16 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Part 4 of Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006). A pre-commencement condition is required because the design of the sustainable drainage measures must be known early in the development process.

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### 8. Arboricultural details

Notwithstanding the information submitted within the application documentation, no development or other operations hereby permitted shall commence on site until an updated arboricultural method statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The statement shall make provision for:

- confirmation of the retention of tree number T22;
- confirmation of implementation of an arboricultural watching brief secured;
- details of the implementation, supervision and monitoring of all temporary tree protection; and
- details of any special construction works within any defined tree protection area.

Reason: To ensure the protection of retained trees and the enhancement of the development by the retention of natural features during the construction phase in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and Policies CS14, CS18 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026. A pre-commencement condition is necessary because insufficient detailed information accompanies the application; proposed foundations, tree protection installation, other measures and works may be required to be undertaken throughout the construction phase and so it is necessary to approve these details before any development takes place.

### 9. Landscaping

No development or other operations hereby permitted shall commence on site until a detailed scheme of hard and soft landscaping for the site, including for the car parking areas, new footways and communal garden, is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The soft landscaping details shall include schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities, an implementation programme and details of written specifications including cultivation and other operations involving tree, shrub and grass establishment. The scheme shall ensure;

- (a) Completion of the approved landscape scheme within the first planting season following completion of development.
- (b) Any trees shrubs or plants that die or become seriously damaged within five years of this development shall be replaced in the following year by plants of the same size and species.

Reason: To ensure the implementation of a satisfactory scheme of landscaping in accordance with The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and Policies CS14, CS18 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026. A pre-commencement condition is necessary because insufficient detailed information accompanies the application; landscaping measures may require work to be undertaken throughout the construction phase and so it is necessary to approve these details before any development takes place.

### 10. Plant and machinery

All plant, machinery and equipment installed or operated in connection with the carrying out of this permission shall be so enclosed and/or attenuated that noise coming from it does not at any time, increase the ambient

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equivalent continuous noise level as measured according to British Standard BS4142:2014 at any adjoining or nearby residential property.

Reason: To protect neighbouring residential amenity. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026, Policy OVS.5 and OVS.6 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

### **11. Fume extraction details**

Prior to the kitchen facilities within the village hall building hereby approved being brought into use, details of a scheme for the extraction, treatment and dispersal of fumes and odours from the kitchen shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The kitchen shall thereafter be operated and maintained in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To protect neighbouring residential amenity. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026, Policy OVS.5 and OVS.6 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

### **12. Boundary Treatment**

Notwithstanding the information submitted within the application documentation, the development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until details, to include a plan indicating the positions, design, materials and type of boundary treatment and gates to be erected within the site including the acoustic fence to the northern boundary, perimeter fencing around the MUGA, community garden, children's play areas, vehicular entrance from Southend Road and field access have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The boundary treatments shall be completed in accordance with the approved scheme before the development hereby permitted is first occupied. The boundary treatment shall thereafter be retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect neighbouring residential amenity, to reduce the risk of crime and anti-social behaviour and to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026, Policy OVS.5 and OVS.6 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

### **13. Refuse and Recycling Facilities**

Notwithstanding the information submitted within the application documentation, prior to the first occupation of the village hall building hereby permitted, details of refuse and recycling storage areas/facilities within the site shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be occupied until the refuse and recycling facilities have been provided in accordance with the approved details and shall thereafter be retained for this purpose.

Reason: To ensure that there is adequate and safe refuse/recycling facilities within the site and to ensure the physical form of the facilities would harmonise with the surroundings. This condition is imposed in accordance

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with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), Policies CS13 and CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006).

### **14. MUGA and Children's Play Area Specification**

Notwithstanding the information submitted within the application documentation, no development hereby permitted shall commence until details of the design and layout of the approved Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), children's play areas and other play space within the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (in consultation with Sport England). The play facilities shall not be constructed other than in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the development is fit for purpose and sustainable. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

### **15. External/Facing Materials**

No development hereby permitted shall take place above foundation level until details and samples of all external facing materials have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development in accordance with The National Planning Policy Framework (2019), Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and the Quality Design SPD (June 2006).

### **16. Obscure Glazing**

All first floor windows in the village hall building hereby permitted shall be fitted with obscure glazing before the individual rooms to which the windows relate are first brought into use. The obscure glazing shall thereafter be retained as such.

Reason: To avoid overlooking/loss of privacy to the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (2006) and Supplementary Planning Guidance 04/2 House Extensions (July 2004).

### **17. Electric Charging Points**

Prior to the first occupation of the village hall building hereby permitted, details of electric vehicle charging points within the site shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The village hall shall not be brought into use until the electric charging points have been provided in accordance with the approved details. The charging points shall thereafter be retained and kept available for use by electric vehicles.

Reason: To promote the use of electric vehicles. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), Policies CS13 and CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Policy P1 of the Housing Site Allocation DPD and Policy TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

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### **18. BREEAM**

The village hall building hereby permitted shall achieve a minimum of Very Good 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 Very Good 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 (2019), Policy CS15 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006).

### **19. Overflow car parking**

The 10 car parking spaces within the community garden area adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site hereby approved shall only be used as overflow car park when the other off-road car parking areas within the site for village hall use are at full capacity or during special events.

Reason: To minimise potential conflict between pedestrians and vehicular traffic in the interests of highway safety and to ensure a satisfactory environment for users of the community garden. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

### **20. Contamination**

If contamination is found at any time during site clearance, groundwork and construction within the application site, the discovery shall be reported as soon as possible to the local planning authority. A full contamination risk assessment shall be carried out and if found to be necessary, a 'remediation method statement' shall be submitted to the local planning authority for written approval. Works shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved 'remediation method statement' and a final validation report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before the dwellings hereby permitted are first occupied.

Reason: In order to protect the amenities of proposed occupants/users of the application site. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (2006).

### **21. Lighting**

Notwithstanding the information submitted within the application documentation, no external lighting shall be installed or operated within the site development until a scheme setting out the hours of use, type, design, lux levels and measures to control glare and overspill light from sports lighting, and measures to ensure sports lights are switched off when not in use, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Sport England. The scheme shall accord with [Sport England's "Outdoor Sports Lighting" Briefing Note published in 2012]. The approved sports lighting shall thereafter be operated and maintained in

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accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory living environment for future occupiers in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (2006).

### **22. Construction Management Plan**

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

- provide for mitigation measures in accordance with BS:5228, Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites;
- Parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- Loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- Erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing;
- Temporary access arrangements to the site, and any temporary hard-standing;
- Wheel washing facilities;
- Measures to control the emission of dust, dirt, smell and other effluvia during construction;
- Control of surface water run off during construction;
- Site security arrangements including hoardings;
- Proposed method of any piling for foundations;
- Detail of haulage routes for hgv deliveries;
- Measures to protect local biodiversity during construction.
- construction and demolition working hours;
- hours during the construction and demolition phase, when delivery vehicles or vehicles taking materials are allowed to enter or leave the site.
- Hours of work
- Hours of good deliveries
- Measures to the protect the playing fields beyond the western boundary of the site from construction relating activities.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of adjoining land uses and occupiers, and in the interests of highway safety. The approval of this information is required at this stage because insufficient information has been submitted with the application. A pre-condition is required because insufficient information accompanies the outline application and the CMS must be in place before demolition/construction operations commence. 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)

### **23. Village Hall - Hours of Operation**

The use of the village hall hereby permitted is restricted to the following hours of operation:



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08:00 to 23:00 - Mondays to Sunday including Public Holidays, and

On no more than 5 days per calendar year, to allow for special events, the village hall use hereby permitted can commence from the earlier time of 06:00.

Reason: To protect neighbouring residential amenity. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

### **24. MUGA and Childrens Play Areas Hours of Operation**

The use of the MUGA and children's plays areas hereby permitted are restricted to the following hours of operation:

08:00 to 21:00 - Mondays to Saturdays; and

09:00 to 20:00 - Sunday and Public Holidays.

Reason: To protect neighbouring residential amenity. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

### **25 Solar Panels**

Notwithstanding the details shown within the application documentation, prior to the installation of any solar panels hereby permitted, details of the panels shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development in accordance with The National Planning Policy Framework (2019), CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and the Quality Design SPD (June 2006).

### **26. Phasing of development and demolition (added)**

No development shall take place until a phasing plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The above plan shall include details of the phasing of the development of the site, and a timetable for the demolition of the existing village hall as part of the development programme. Thereafter the development and demolition shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plan.

Reason: To ensure appropriate phasing of development, including the timely demolition of the existing village hall to avoid harm to the amenity of the area. A pre-commencement condition is required because the phasing plan would need to be adhered to through all demolition and construction operations. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS13, CS14 and CS19 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).

### **(2) Application No. & Parish: 19/01803/FUL - Murdochs, Bath Road, Calcot, Reading**

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4(2)) concerning Planning Application 19/01803/FUL in respect of the demolition of a derelict public house and construction of surface car park, including associated fencing and security control.

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Ms Sarah Melton, Senior Planning Officer, introduced the report and ran through the key points. It was confirmed that approval had been given in principle for the loss of the public house.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Kevin Page, Parish Council representative, Robert Teesdale, agent, Councillor Peter Argyle, Ward Member and Councillor Tony Linden, Adjacent Ward Member, addressed the Committee on this application.

### **Parish Council Representation:**

Kevin Page in addressing the Committee raised the following points:

- He was the Chairman of Tilehurst Parish Council. The report provided by the Planning Officer was comprehensive and the Parish Council agreed with the recommendation to refuse planning permission.
- The proposed car park, which would entail a large area of hard standing was not in keeping with the surrounding residential area. In the view of the Parish Council one blot on the landscape would be replaced with another if the application was approved.
- The Parish Council had not received enough information about the application however, now that this had been received it still did not feel assured.
- There was concern that the application would increase traffic in the area particularly on the bend at the bottom of Langley Hill.
- If the site became a car park there was concern that there would be re-occurrences of travellers using the site as has occurred in the past. The site was notorious for travellers. There had been a number of traveller incursions on the site, which was why bollards had been placed at the entrance.
- The access to and from the site was particularly concerning. It had been noted from a letter on the 14th August that security fencing and CCTV was proposed for the site. The Parish Council questioned if this would provide adequate security. The fencing and CCTV facility would also be unsightly in the local area.
- The Parish Council questioned if there was any need for a car park in the proposed location.

### **Agent's Representations:**

Mr Teesdale in addressing the Committee raised the following points:

- He would manage whatever development went ahead on the site.
- The site had been labelled a 'Brexit' site and any plans for domestic housing were not currently viable. This would however be looked into in the future.
- The car park would provide a short term business and 24 hour security would be provided on the site. This would include a security person being present on the site 24 hours per day and this was important with regards to comments made about travellers.
- The applicant was responsible for ensuring no-one was able to enter the site and cause harm to themselves. At the present time the site was often used by people using illegal substances, and needles and faeces had been removed from the vacant building on the site.
- Regarding the appraisal for the site, a development plan had been established and the loss of the public house had been approved in principle.

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- The car park would just be a short term business and Mr Teesdale stated that the site had once housed a public house and therefore had already been used for car parking purposes in the past.
- Regarding the character and appearance of the site, this was covered comprehensively in the report. The aim would be to build housing on the site as soon as possible.
- The impact on amenity was minimal. Security on the site was a key point of the application as it would provide a person on the site 24 hours per day. This would help to deter travellers and keep the health and safety risk, including the use of illegal substances on the site, to a minimum.
- It was noted in the report that a small number of buses served the area however, what had been omitted was that the times of these services had been reduced substantially.
- It was noted that the site was unattractive at the current time and this was unlikely to change prior to housing being approved.

### **Member Questions to the Agent:**

Councillor Graham Pask referred to the point that the site would be used for housing in the future. He acknowledged that the existing structure was hard to secure and asked why this had not been demolished. Mr Teesdale stated that they had been advised that they were not allowed to demolish it currently.

Councillor Alan Law further queried the point about demolition of the current structure. Mr Teesdale referred to the outline application for the site for four houses, which had been approved. Until this application was progressed they were unable to secure the demolition of the public house. He asked Officers to state if this point was incorrect.

Councillor Peter Argyle asked if there was any evidence to suggest the sort of people that would need to use the car parking facility if approved. Mr Teesdale stated that the facility would be aimed at car sharers and those using the M4 corridor. No traffic of parking survey had been undertaken. It was a sensible business proposal to help raise revenue that would also help secure the site.

Councillor Williamson further questioned the point of demolition. He asked if permission was being sought for the car park so that the building could be demolished. If permission was given to simply demolish the structure, Councillor Andrew Williamson asked if the applicant would be happy with this. Mr Teesdale stated that the applicant would be happy with this however, there was the issue that open space attracted travellers.

Councillor Williamson noted that there would be a security person on the site 24 hours a day, seven days per week. He queried why CCTV was also required. Mr Teesdale stated that people liked to feel assured that their vehicle was being watched at all times.

### **Ward Member Representation:**

Councillor Peter Argyle in addressing the Committee raised the following points:

- He had listened to the problems currently being caused by the site, which was an eye sore however, as stated by Planning Officers the use of the area as a car park was not in keeping with the residential character of the area.
- The site with the current structure demolished would be even more out of keeping with the area.

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- Councillor Argyle was not sure how many people would actually use the site for car parking.
- There were currently bollards on the entrance to the site that would need removing and this could be an incentive for travellers.

Councillor Argyle read out a statement from his fellow Ward Member, Councillor Richard Somner, who raised the following points:

- The current site was a health and safety risk as well as a security risk.
- West Berkshire Council had repeatedly funded solutions to manage travellers due to the site being vacant and unsecured, such as implementing a barrier blockade to the road, which needed to be monitored to ensure it remained in place.
- There was great concern from the general public in the area. The site was an embarrassment to anyone who cared about the area and to the two Parish Councils.
- Whilst the original use of the building historically generated a reasonable amount of traffic during lunch or evening trading hours there would be great concern regarding the impact of increased traffic volume at probable peak hours.
- Councillor Somner provided details of the existing public transport services to the area that served the A4 corridor well.
- There was little evidence that encouraging residents to drive to the location to car share would be beneficial to either the area, the local residents of the environment.
- What needed to happen with the site, in Councillor Somner's view, was the fulfilment of the previously approved application to develop the site into homes that were in keeping with those surrounding it.
- If the original use of the building could not be reinstated then there was an extant application that should be put into action. If not in full, then initially with the safe demolition of the current building and securing of the site.

### **Adjacent Ward Member Representation:**

Councillor Tony Linden in addressing the Committee raised the following points:

- His Ward was just across the road from the application site. The site was a complete eye sore and there was concern regarding the safety, particularly with regards to children.
- Councillor Linden stated that there was already a car park at Sainsbury's that could be used and a bus services in the area.
- As stated by Councillor Somner, the site should be used for housing. He was aware of issues relating to Brexit however, this was the same for everyone.

### **Member Questions to the Ward Member:**

Councillor Law asked if the car park at Sainsbury's was time limited. Councillor Linden stated that there was no camera in place currently. Others in the area were time limited but Sainsbury's was not.

### **Member Questions to Officers:**

Councillor Pask asked if the current structure could be demolished. Mr Bob Dray stated that there was outline consent for housing on the site, so reserved matters with

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conditions could be applied for by the applicant. Based on what had been said, Mr Dray suspected that the concern with the extant permission may be that a CIL charge would become liable if demolition occurred under the terms of that permission.

Sarah Melton stated that the outline application would be valid until April 2021. Mr Dray stated that a reserved matters application could be made up to three years from the date of the outline permission, and that a further two years would be allowed following approval of reserved matters to implement.

Councillor Williamson noted that the local community had an issue with the building and therefore for the good of the community asked if the Council could help to facilitate demolition of the building. Ms Melton stated that standalone application for the demolition of the building could possibly be approved without a CIL Charge.

Councillor Jeremy Cottam asked if it was the owner's responsibility to ensure the site was safe and it was confirmed that it was although Mr Dray stated that this fell outside of the planning system.

Councillor Geoff Mayes asked if the land owner was responsible for the cost of removing travellers from the site. It seemed that the car park might be a solution to this issue. If the vacant structure was removed it would leave the site open and Councillor Mayes was concerned that it would leave it vulnerable. Ms Melton stated that this was not for consideration as part of the application. Mr Dray elaborated that safety, securing and ASB were capable of being material considerations, but advised members that they should not base a decision based on reference to any particular group of people.

Councillor Williamson asked if the land to the front of the site was within the ownership of West Berkshire Council and Mr Goddard confirmed that it was.

Councillor Joanne Stewart was interested that an objection had not been raised by Highways. Councillor Stewart was concerned about access in and out of the site. She felt that this could be particularly dangerous when exiting the site when trying to see if vehicles were travelling down Langley Hill. Councillor Stewart asked for comments on her points from the Highways' Officer. Mr Paul Goddard stated that if the car park was used by car sharers then there would be less vehicles on the road. A highways assessment had not been carried out on the site and if Member's were concerned this could be added as an additional reason for refusal to the application. Mr Goddard reported that the sight lines onto Langley Hill were deemed acceptable. Councillor Law concurred as the site once housed a public house. Councillor Stewart agreed with this point however, highlighted that traffic would not have been travelling in and out of the site at peak times.

Councillor Law queried if the application was for a temporary or permanent car park facility and Mr Dray confirmed that the application was for a permanent car park. Temporary permission could be considered, although Officers had considered this option and concluded against such a recommendation.

### **Debate:**

Councillor Williamson proposed that Members approved the Officer recommendation to refuse planning permission, based on the reasons detailed in the report. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Argyle.

Councillor Macro was concerned about the viability of the proposal. He feared that if not enough funding was raised to fund the security proposed for the site then issues could arise. Councillor Macro supported issues raised by Officers and the impact these would have on the area.

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Councillor Graham Pask understood the problems raised by the applicant however, felt that a demolition plan with secure fencing would be favourable. Councillor Pask supported the Officers recommendation to refuse planning permission.

The Chairman invited the Committee to vote on the proposal by Councillor Williamson, seconded by Councillor Argyle. At the vote the motion was carried.

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

**1. Impact on character and appearance of the area**

The application site by reason of its location and size sits within a prominent position along the Old Bath Road and Bath Road (A4). The immediate context and wider surrounding area is predominately residential in character. The street scene to the east of Bath Road and Old Bath Road consists of a varied building line made up of detached and semi-detached dwellings with a mixture of designs. Whilst the buildings along this stretch of Tilehurst and Calcot are significantly varied, the frontages of Bath Road (A4) and Old Bath Road are ones of built up frontages with substantial buildings set back in their plot. The removal of built form from the site would result in a significant gap in the street scene that would be incongruous in appearance. Furthermore the introduction of an expanse of tarmac and chain link fencing hard against the road would create a very stark and unattractive environment which is out of character and fails to make a positive contribution to the street scene in what is a prominent location. The proposed works are therefore contrary to the requirements of paragraph 127 of the NPPF, which requires, inter alia, that development will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, result in a visually attractive development, is sympathetic to the local character and maintain a strong sense of place. Furthermore the proposed works are contrary to the requirements of Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 which requires development to demonstrate high quality and sustainable design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area. Additionally, the proposal fails to comply with Core Strategy Policy CS19 which requires development to appropriate in terms of location and the existing settlement form, pattern and character. The proposal scheme does not respect the residential character of the area.

*(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.26 pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

**Date of Signature** .....