

Item No.	Application No. and Parish	Statutory Target Date	Proposal, Location, Applicant
(2)	20/01895/COMIND Beenham	2 December 2020 ¹	<p>Proposed scaffold hire depot, comprising open storage area, modular office building and car parking, together with means of access off Pips Way, drainage and landscaping.</p> <p>Land West Of Anchor Van Centre, Bath Road, Pips Way, Beenham, Reading</p> <p>Generation (UK) - Mr Clifford</p>

¹ Extension of time agreed with applicants until 3rd June 2021

The application can be viewed on the Council's website at the following link:
<http://planning.westberks.gov.uk/rpp/index.asp?caseref=20/01895/COMIND>

Recommendation Summary: Delegate to the Head of Development and Planning to GRANT planning permission.

Ward Member(s): Councillor Dominic Boeck

Reason for Committee Determination: Referred to EAPC by the Development Control Manager given the need to balance economic and environmental considerations in the AONB.

Committee Site Visit: 26th May 2021

Contact Officer Details

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This application seeks planning permission for a proposed scaffold hire depot, comprising an open storage area, modular office building and car parking, together with means of access off Pips Way, drainage and landscaping.
- 1.2 The proposed development is not within any defined settlement boundary, and is therefore regarded as open countryside for planning purposes. The development is within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the boundary of which runs along the A4.
- 1.3 The application site is located outside of, but adjacent to the Protected Employment Area known as Beenham Industrial Area. The site is a former landfill, which has now been restored. The site is therefore regarded as greenfield land, as it does not fall within the definition of previously developed land in the NPPF.
- 1.4 Planning permission has been granted for part of the application site to accommodate an extension to the existing Anchor Vans site to the north-east. Part of the concrete access for this development has been erected. There is an existing earth bund which prevents access to the current site. The site appears to have been left and as such vegetation has reclaimed the land.
- 1.5 The proposal is for a scaffold hire depot, with a site area of 1.56 hectares. The majority of the area would be used for the storage of materials and equipment. There would be a site office and car park situated in the north-west corner.
- 1.6 The site is accessed via Pips Way from the Bath Road (A4). The proposed development will have 20 parking spaces for staff, 4 parking spaces for visitors. There will be two electric vehicle charging points and cycle stands for 8 bikes. There are some opportunities for sustainable modes of transport, with a regular bus route along A4 and the nearby Aldermaston Railway Station, although it is considered that the nature of the use is such that movements to and from the site are less likely to make significant use of such modes of transport.
- 1.7 The application would retain the existing landscaping on the existing earth bund. The boundary to the North of the site would have a 5 metre wide strip of trees and shrub planting. To the south of the site the boundary would retain the poplar tree row and additional planting of small trees would be added.

2. Planning History

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

Application	Proposal	Decision / Date
17/00386/FUL	To erect perimeter fencing and form car parking area for storage and display of motor vehicles on former land-fill site, including new vehicular access off Pips Way for deliveries, with sales / customer access via Anchor Vans Ltd. Anchor Vans Ltd Bath Road Beenham Reading Berkshire RG7 5JF	Approved – 11.05.2017

18/03343/COND1	Application for approval of details reserved by Conditions 7 - Contamination, 8 - Sustainable drainage, 9 - Tree protection, 10 - Landscaping, 15 - Parking and turning , 16 - Transporter delivery and 17 - Delivery management plan of approved application 17/00386/FUL - To erect perimeter fencing and form car parking area for storage and display of motor vehicles on former land-fill site, including new vehicular access off Pips Way for deliveries, with sales / customer access via Anchor Vans Ltd.	Approved – 08.05.2019
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3. Procedural Matters

- 3.1 **EIA:** A screening letter was undertaken under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, wherein it was established the development is not considered to be EIA development.
- 3.2 **Publicity:** A site notice displayed on 23.10.2020 at the entrance to Pips Way; the deadline for representations expired on 13.11.2020. A public notice was also displayed in the Newbury Weekly News on 10.09.2020; the deadline for representations expired on 01.10.2020.
- 3.3 **CIL:** Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is, a levy charged on most new development to pay for new infrastructure required as a result of the new development. CIL will be charged on residential (C3 and C4) and retail (A1 - A5) development at a rate per square metre (based on Gross Internal Area) on new development of more than 100 square metres of net floor space (including extensions) or when a new dwelling is created (even if it is less than 100 square metres). Given the proposed use, the initial assessment is that the development would be zero rated. However, 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.

Beenham Parish Council:	Objection. Members are concerned that the depot would create a noise disturbance to nearby residents. That the development would be an intrusion on the open space. That the open storage nature of the development would be unsightly in an AONB.
Padworth Parish Council (adjacent):	No comments received.

WBC Highways:	<p>No objection. The clarification previously requested has now been provided within the Technical Note. I am satisfied that the level of vehicle movements that are likely to be generated, as summarised in the table at paragraph 4.14, would not be to the detriment of highway safety. It is not considered that the impact of these additional vehicles on the public highway would be severe.</p> <p>The parking and turning, electric vehicle charging points, and proposed cycle stands are acceptable.</p> <p>The highway recommendation is therefore for conditional approval.</p>
Environmental Health:	<p>I have reviewed the Noise impact Assessment and write to confirm that is satisfactory and shows a low impact, however I recommend that the measures outlined in Section 5 f the report be implemented in order to improve the noise environment from the site.</p>
Environment Agency:	<p>We remove our objection to the application as submitted. However, as the Phase 1 Preliminary Risk Assessment by Encon proposes further site intrusive investigation (Page 10) and the drainage design by P&DG may require further detailed clarification, therefore we request planning conditions should be imposed on any planning permission to protect groundwater quality from water leaching through a historic landfill.</p>
WBC Waste Management:	<p>No comment received.</p>
Natural England:	<p>No objection. Following receipt of further information on 29/01/2021, Natural England is satisfied that the specific issues we have raised in previous correspondence relating to this development have been resolved. We therefore consider that there will be no significant adverse impacts on protected landscapes and withdraw our objection.</p>
WBC Tree Officer:	<p>No objections. TPO – no, Conservation Area – no.</p> <p>The revised landscaping proposal is welcome - the planting at the south east is to be bolstered to a hedge with a good mix of native species proposed. There is the addition of a handful of standard trees to the north east of the site also, though these will struggle if not adequately protected from vehicle parking. A knee rail in front of the tree pits would help and ensure the expense of installing 5 tree pits in this area was not wasted. Perhaps the agent could confirm this will happen please?</p> <p>Subject to the above assurance, I have no objections to the proposal subject to condition.</p>
WBC Ecology:	<p>No comments received.</p>
Exolum (Oil Pipe Line):	<p>No objection subject to condition.</p>

WBC Economic Development Officer:	<p>Support.</p> <p>I fully support this proposal. The creation of 20 employment opportunities will give a very significant boost to the local employment market, and further solidify this area as an employment hub. The presence of these new jobs and the day to day expenditure associated with them should also have some positive impact upon the local daytime economy of Aldermaston.</p> <p>This proposal would allow a national business to expand and invest within West Berkshire for the first time. Providing an environment that supports this adaptability and growth is a priority of both our Economic Development Strategy, and paragraph 80 of the NPPF.</p> <p>The site is compatible with the surrounding protected employment area and is in a location which has been designated by the HELAA as having potential for development for B2 and B8 uses. For these reasons while the site does not fall within the protected employment area, I feel it is appropriate and in-keeping with Core Strategy policy CS9 because it is not in conflict with surrounding uses, it has access to a major road, and is the closest viable location to the PEA available.</p> <p>Given the surrounding area contains a large amount of business space, and given its' low height, I do not feel this proposal will have a detrimental impact upon the character of the site. That is if the applicants implement the conditions requested by Environmental Health.</p> <p>Furthermore the proximity of Aldermaston train station will provide a sustainable commuter option for employees; but this should be supported by the provision of bicycle racks and an electric car charging port on site.</p>
Local Lead Flood Authority:	No comment received.
Ministry of Defence:	No objection. Thank you for consulting Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) on the above proposed development. This application relates to a site outside of Ministry of Defence safeguarding areas. We can therefore confirm that the Ministry of Defence has no safeguarding objections to this proposal.
AWE:	No comment received.
Archaeological Officer:	Thank you for the consultation. There are no archaeological implications to this proposal on restored land. I do not believe there are any setting issues for heritage assets either.
North Wessex Downs AONB:	No comment received.
Planning Policy:	No comment received.

Housing Development:	No objection.
Thames Water Utilities:	No objection – standing advice.

Public representations

4.2 Representations have been received from 1 contributor, objecting to the proposal. 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:

- I refer to the revised Noise Assessment that has recently been posted online. I know little about Noise Assessments, but I live in Beenham Village and I do hear the bangs and scrapes that come from the industrial activities below us. I therefore have the following comments on the Noise Assessment:
 - The assessment only considers the closest NSRs, and does not consider impacts on higher land that is further away but much more exposed to noise.
 - The assessment considers noise from vehicle movements, and a tube cutter. It does not consider the noise from reversing alarms and bangs from loading scaffolding tubes. These are the noises that we can hear in Beenham Village, much more than the constant noise from the road.
 - The background noise in Beenham is low, so any industrial noise is much more noticeable.

I would be grateful if the Noise Assessment could be updated to cover these issues.

- The Landscaping Plan has details of hedges which are all very well for neighbouring properties, but do little to screen it from the higher ground.

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, CS16, CS17, CS18, CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 (WBCS).
- Policies TRANS.1, OVS.5 and OVS.6 and 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 2019-2024
- WBC Quality Design SPD (2006)

- Planning Obligations SPD (2015)
- Local Transport Plan for West Berkshire 2011-2026
- Manual for Streets
- North Wessex Downs AONB Position Statement on Setting
- WBC Cycle and Motorcycle Advice and Standards for New Development
- West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (2019)
- North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment

6. Appraisal

6.1 The main issues for consideration in this application are:

- Compliance with commercial policies of the development plan
- Major development in the AONB
- HELAA
- Previous planning permission and fall-back position
- Character and appearance (trees and landscaping)
- Neighbouring amenity and noise
- Highways
- Employment benefits
- Ecology
- Oil pipeline
- Contamination
- Flood risk and drainage

Compliance with commercial policies of the development plan

- 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 According to Policy ADPP1, most development will be within or adjacent to the settlements in the hierarchy, and related to their transport accessibility and level of services. The majority of development will take place on previously developed land, and the urban areas will be the focused for most development. The scale and density of development will be related to the site's accessibility, character and surroundings. Significant intensification of residential, 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. Only appropriate limited development in the countryside (outside of the defined settlement boundaries) will be allowed, focused on addressing identified needs and maintaining a strong rural economy.
- 6.4 Policy ADPP5 is the spatial strategy for the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (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. Development will respond positively to the local context, and respect identified landscape features and components of natural beauty. With respect to the economy, Policy ADPP5 states that the Protected Employment Areas within the AONB will continue to play a vital role in supporting the local economy, especially those in edge of

centre locations. Small, local businesses will be supported, encouraged and protected within the AONB providing local job opportunities and maintaining the rural economy.

- 6.5 According to Policy CS9, the Council seeks to facilitate and promote the growth and forecasted change of business development in the plan period in order to retain a portfolio of sites for B8 uses in suitable locations. 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. Any proposals for such uses outside these areas/locations will be assessed by the Council against the following:
- compatibility with uses in the area surrounding the proposals and potential impacts on those uses; and
 - capacity and impact on the road network and access by sustainable modes of transport.
- 6.6 In terms of managing the scale, type and intensification of business development, 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.
- 6.7 According to Policy CS10, proposals to diversify the rural economy will be encouraged, particularly where they are located in or adjacent to Rural Service Centres and Service Villages. 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.
- 6.8 The proposed development is not within any defined settlement boundary, and is therefore regarded as open countryside in terms of Policy ADPP1. The settlement boundary for Aldermaston Wharf runs opposite along the southern side of the A4, which is predominantly residential in character. The site is outside of, but adjacent to the Protected Employment Area known as Beenham Industrial Area to the west. There is a further small cluster of economic development along the northern side of the A4, directly abutting the site to the north-east. The development is within the AONB. The site has been restored and in planning terms is considered greenfield land.
- 6.9 In terms of Policy CS9, the site is adjacent to the existing Anchor Vans premises to the north-east, and other commercial development to the south-west, including Porsche and vacant land which has permission for B2 and B8 uses. The Beenham Industrial Estate comprises mainly B2 and B8 uses. Behind the site to the north is the Grundon Waste Management facility. The application seeks a B8 use. It is considered that the proposed scaffold hire depot would have a high degree of compatibility with the existing commercial uses in the area.
- 6.10 The nearby residential development is a more sensitive use. The application has been supported by a noise assessment which demonstrates that the proposed use would not cause material harm. Lighting can be controlled by condition. In the context of existing commercial development, it is considered that the proposed use is compatible.
- 6.11 The site is accessed from the A4, and as such there are no capacity issues relating to the local road network. There are some opportunities for sustainable modes of transport (e.g. Regular bus route along A4, nearby Aldermaston Railway Station), although it is considered that the nature of the use is such that visitors are less likely to make use of public transport options in any event.
- 6.12 Overall, it is considered the proposal complies with Policy CS9.

- 6.13 As indicated within the planning statement the proposed business on the site is the UK's largest supplier of access, scaffolding, groundworks, edge protection, safety and training products. Through a nationwide network of branches and lorry fleet it provides a full hire and sale service to the Construction, Events, Industrial and Utility sectors. The proposal would help diversify the local rural economy, albeit with quite a sizeable operation. As discussed above, the site is considered to be compatible with existing commercial development in the area. In this respect it is considered to be supported by Policy CS10.

Major development in the AONB

- 6.14 According to paragraph 172 of the NPPF, great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:
- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
 - b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
 - c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.
- 6.15 Footnote 55 of the NPPF advises that, for the purposes of paragraphs 172, whether a proposal is 'major development' is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined. This means that it 'major development' does not have the same means as given in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (e.g. 1,000sqm or more new floor space, or site areas of 1 hectare or more). Rather it is a matter of planning judgement.
- 6.16 The site area is 1.56 hectares. The nature and scale of the development are considered comparable to the existing commercial development that surround the site on two sides. In this context it is considered that the development would not have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated an AONB. Consequently, it is concluded that the proposed development is not 'major development' in terms of paragraph 172, and therefore the policy to refuse except in exceptional circumstances is not engaged. It should be stressed that this conclusion does not diminish the great weight that should still be applied to serving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

HELAA

- 6.17 All local planning authorities are required by national planning policy and guidance to maintain an up-to-date picture of the amount of land that is available for new development, including land for housing and economic development. This process is known as the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).

- 6.18 It has been noted by the Economic Development Officer and the applicant that the site was assessed in the 2020 HELAA under BEEN5 as potentially developable for B2 and B8 uses. However, this is subject to surface water issues and land contamination.
- 6.19 It is important to note that whilst the HELAA will identify potential sites, it will not allocate them for development or add weight to the site for the purpose of decision making on a planning application. The allocation of future sites for development will only take place through statutory plan processes (e.g. Local Plan, Neighbourhood Development Plans) which undergo public consultation and independent examination. This site has not been allocated and consequently no weight should be given to the site's inclusion within the HELAA.

Previous planning permission and fall-back position

- 6.20 Planning permission was granted in May 2017, pursuant to application 17/00386/FUL, to erect perimeter fencing and form a car parking area for storage and display of motor vehicles on the former land-fill site, including new vehicular access off Pips Way for deliveries, with sales / customer access via Anchor Vans Ltd.
- 6.21 All pre-commencement conditions for 17/00386/FUL have been discharged under 18/03343/COND1. An email was sent to the Council on 12.03.2020 which detailed a photo showing the site access being constructed, in order to indicate that the planning permission had been implemented. No formal application has been made to verify the implementation of this permission. Nevertheless it is considered that the relevant planning policies remain the same and there has been no significant changes on the ground which indicate a different decision would be made if a resubmission was made.
- 6.22 Application 17/00386/FUL had a condition which restricted the use of the site to the storage and display of motor vehicles, and associated sales. Therefore, planning permission would have been required for any use outside the aforementioned.
- 6.23 The proposed scaffold hire depot will have a site area of 1.56 hectares whereas the previous permission granted under application 17/00386/FUL had a site area of 0.88 hectare.
- 6.24 Overall, it is considered that limited weight should be given to any fallback position arising from application 17/00386/FUL application, and this application should be judged on its own merit against current policies.

Character and appearance (tree and landscaping)

- 6.25 According to Policy CS14, new development must demonstrate 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. Good design relates not only to the appearance of a development, but the way in which it functions. Considerations of design and layout must be informed by the wider context, having regard not just to the immediate area, but to the wider locality. Development shall contribute positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place.
- 6.26 Policy CS19 states that particular regard will be given to, amongst others, (a) the sensitivity of the area to change, and (b) ensuring that new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and design in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character.
- 6.27 The West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) was published in 2019 and provides an up-to-date assessment of the district's landscape. The application site is located within landscape character area LV1 – *Kennet Lower River Valley* – which

covers the strip of the countryside in the lower Kennet river valley between Theale and Newbury. The area is characterised by a flat and wide valley floor. It is bounded to the north and south by a change in topography, marking the rising slopes of the immediate valley sides. The northern edge of the floodplain (north of the A4), forms part of the North Wessex Downs AONB. Whilst the area is predominantly rural in character, the LCA identifies nucleated clusters of development around small settlements, and that transport corridors follow the length of the valley, including the main railway line and the A4. Gravel extraction has led to the modification of large portions of the valley floor, including areas around Aldermaston Wharf. Large industrial and commercial areas have also been constructed.

- 6.28 The application site forms part of the nationally valued AONB landscape, but it is not considered that the site exhibits any strong examples of the other valued features and qualities that the LCA identifies for this area, primarily due to past mineral extraction creating an industrialised character with the subsequent presence of existing commercial development.
- 6.29 Currently the site appears as a grassed field with no discernible use. The site is enclosed by post and rail fencing, sections of hedgerow vegetation and open storage areas and warehousing to the east, and by bunding, a short section of hedgerow and vegetation west separating it from Pips Way. To the south the site is enclosed by a low bund, a line of mature Poplar trees and understorey vegetation, beyond which is Bath Road. The surrounding buildings do give the impression of the site being surrounded by industrial development. The site very much has a character of a vacant plot in an industrial estate. The rural character has been eroded by the other nearby industrial developments within the immediate vicinity.
- 6.30 The proposed would see the current grassland covered in hardstanding with landscaping around the boundary. The landscaped earth bund would be further enhanced by additional boundary landscaping to the north of the site, which would comprise a 5 metre wide strip of tree and shrub planting. To the south of the site the boundary will retain the poplar tree row and additional planning of small trees will be added.
- 6.31 Natural England initially objected to the proposed scheme but removed their objection after the submission landscape and visual appraisal (LVA) and additional landscaping proposals.
- 6.32 The LVA indicated that a landscape (mitigation and enhancement) strategy is recommended to respond to some of the proposal's *minor* and *minor moderate* visual impacts. The proposed landscape mitigation centres around strengthening the boundary vegetation, and providing a landscape 'buffer' to the site's northern boundary. The landscape proposals also seek to provide a net gain to biodiversity through the use of native tree and shrub species to complement the existing landscape structure. The LVA concluded that by reason of the proposal's nature and scale, on balance it will be acceptably absorbed into its landscape setting without materially significant harm to the baseline landscape and visual resource.
- 6.33 The Council's tree officer has also removed their objection provided the landscaping details were conditioned. It is considered that robust landscaping proposals have been put forwards and these mitigate the potential harmful of this development of the North Wessex Downs AONB. Thus the development is cable of complying with policies ADPP5, CS14 and CS19.

Neighbouring amenity and noise

- 6.34 According to Policy CS14, new development must demonstrate high quality and sustainable design that makes a positive contribution to the quality of life in West Berkshire. Paragraph 127 of the NPPF states planning decisions should ensure that developments create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- 6.35 Consequently, all development should be designed in a way to avoid any unacceptable harm to neighbouring residential living conditions, or the amenity of other uses. Applications will typically be assessed in terms of any significant loss of light, overlooking of neighbouring buildings or land, and whether the proposal would result in any undue sense of enclosure, overbearing impact, or harmful loss of outlook to neighbouring properties. The environmental impacts arising from commercial development are also relevant, such as noise, dust, fumes, odours and lighting.
- 6.36 Policy OVS.6 states that the Council will require appropriate measures to be taken in the location, design, layout and operation of development proposals in order to minimise any adverse impact as a result of noise generated. Special consideration is required where noisy development is proposed in or near Sites of Special Scientific Interest or which would harm the quiet enjoyment of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 6.37 The proposed use is considered compatible with the existing commercial development in all these respects. Given the location of the proposed development, and the separation distance from residential properties, no concerns are raised in terms of the built form (overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impacts).
- 6.38 One of the protected characteristic on the North Wessex Downs AONB is tranquillity. According to the PPG, for an area to justify being protected for its tranquillity, it is likely to be relatively undisturbed by noise from human sources that undermine the intrinsic character of the area. It may, for example, provide a sense of peace and quiet or a positive soundscape where natural sounds such as birdsong or flowing water are more prominent than background noise, e.g. from transport. It is considered the site is in area which does not exhibit this special quality of the AONB due to the proximity to the A4 Bath Road and existing commercial development. It is therefore considered that this is not a determinative issue in this case.
- 6.39 Concern has, however, been raised in public representations and by the parish council with respect to the impact on local amenity. An objector did raise concerns in regards to the noise level generated by this proposed development.
- 6.40 A Noise Impact Assessment was undertaken by the applicants, and reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health Officer. The Environmental Health Officer also reviewed the comments made by objectors regarding the noise assessment. They concluded that the assessment was satisfactory and shows a low impact, however, they do recommend that the measures outlined in Section 5 the report be implemented by way of mitigation. These include:
- All saw work needs to be undertaken in the northern corner of the site.
 - All scaffolding inspecting also needs to take place at the northern corner of the site.
 - A noise management plan should be implemented at the site.
 - All employees should be trained in low noise working practices.
 - All engines should be turned off when vehicles are stationary no engine idling.

- 6.41 The mitigation measures can be secured by condition. It is considered that with these mitigation measures the proposed development will not have a materially harmful impact of neighbouring amenity through the noise. When considered as whole, it is concluded the proposal are compliant with Policies and OVS.6.

Highways

- 6.42 Policies CS13 of the Core Strategy, and TRANS.1 of the Local Plan relate to highways and parking provision for non-residential uses. The Highway Authority was consulted on the application documents. The Highways Officer found that they were satisfied that the level of vehicle movements that are likely to be generated would not be to the detriment of highway safety. It is not considered that the impact of these additional vehicles on the public highway would not be severe. The parking and turning, electric vehicle charging points, and proposed cycle stands are acceptable. It is considered the proposal is compliant with the aforementioned policies subject to conditions.

Employment benefits

- 6.43 According to paragraph 80 of the NPPF, planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be given to the need to support economic growth and productivity.
- 6.44 The Council's Economic Development Officer fully supports this proposal. They consider the creation of 20 employment opportunities will give a very significant boost to the local employment market, and further solidify this area as an employment hub. The presence of these new jobs and the day to day expenditure associated with them should also have some positive impact upon the local daytime economy of Aldermaston.
- 6.45 The Economic Development Officer further considers that this proposal would allow a national business to expand and invest within West Berkshire for the first time. Providing an environment that supports this adaptability and growth is a priority of both the Council's Economic Development Strategy, and paragraph 80 of the NPPF.
- 6.46 Accordingly, it is considered that significant weight should be given to the economic benefits of this proposal.

Ecology

- 6.47 A Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) has been submitted as part of this application. No comments have been received from the Council's Ecologist; however, it is noted that no ecological objections were raised in relation to application 17/00386/FUL. It is considered that the LEMP would lead to better management of the site in regards to ecology and landscaping. It is considered the proposal is likely to have a neutral impact in regards to ecological matters.

Oil pipeline

- 6.48 According to Policy CS5 the Council will work with infrastructure providers and stakeholders to identify requirements for infrastructure provision and services for new development and will seek to co-ordinate infrastructure delivery, whilst protecting local amenities and environmental quality. An oil pipeline crosses the application site, and consequently consultation with Exolum has taken place. Following negotiation, no objections have been raised subject to a condition to provide a Construction and Operations Management Plan. It is considered that the proposed development can

therefore be undertaken without harming this infrastructure. The application is therefore compliant with Policy CS5.

Contamination

- 6.49 According to Policy OVS.5 the Council will only permit development proposals where they do not give rise to an unacceptable pollution of the environment.
- 6.50 The Environment Agency (EA) removed their objection subject to the imposition of conditions. They found that the Phase 1 Preliminary Risk Assessment by Encon proposes a further intrusive site investigation, which may require further detailed clarification. However, the EA felt that this could be dealt with by condition.
- 6.51 It is considered that the measures set out in the Preliminary Risk Assessment demonstrates the proposal would not lead to unacceptable pollution or contamination of the environment. Thus the proposal is compliant with Policy OVS.5.

Flood risk and drainage

- 6.52 The site is located within Flood Zone 1, which indicates a low risk of fluvial (river) flooding. It is also not within any critical drainage area identified by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the district. However, a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted because the site area is more than 1 hectare. The applicant has also submitted a Sustainable Drainage Methods Strategy and Plan.
- 6.53 The EA removed their objection after received additional sustainable drainage information. They found that the drainage design by P&DG may require further detailed clarification, but that this could be dealt with by condition.
- 6.54 Notwithstanding the absence of any flood risk objections, Policy CS16 states that on all development sites, surface water will be managed in a sustainable manner through the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Methods (SuDS) in accordance with best practice and the proposed national standards and to provide attenuation to greenfield run-off rates and volumes, for all new development and re-development and provide other benefits where possible such as water quality, biodiversity and amenity. The Council has adopted a Sustainable Drainage SPD which supports this policy. A condition is therefore necessary to secure the prior approval of a detailed sustainable drainage scheme and its subsequent implementation, in order to comply with Policy CS16.
- 6.55 It is considered the proposal has demonstrated that it is capable of complying with Policy CS16 subject to conditions.

7. Planning Balance and Conclusion

- 7.1 It is considered that this decision is finely balanced. Whilst the application site is located in open countryside in terms of Policy ADPP1, it is considered that the proposal complies with Policies CS9 and CS10 and therefore the most important policies of the development plan when read as a whole. Furthermore, the economic benefits of the proposal are considered to attract significant weight in favour of granting planning permission.
- 7.2 The development would introduce new built form into a currently undeveloped parcel of land within the AONB, albeit recognising that permission has previously been granted on part of the land for an extension of adjacent commercial development. Given the

existing context of commercial development within the immediate vicinity, it is considered that the proposal can be absorbed into its landscape setting, and any landscape harm would be limited. Applying great weight to this limited harm, it is considered that this would not outweigh the policy support and economic benefits.

- 7.3 Other environmental and technical considerations can be made acceptable through the application of planning conditions. It is therefore recommended that conditional planning permission is granted.

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:

- Application Form received 17.08.2020
- Site Location Plan received 02.09.2020
- Amended Site Plan drawing number 20.061/02h received 05.04.2021
- Proposed Elevation received 01.09.2020
- Proposed Floor Plans received 01.09.2020
- Roof Specification received 01.09.2020
- Initial Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy from Encon Associates received 25.08.2020
- Summary Statement of Flood Risk and Sustainable drainage received 17.08.2020
- Drainage sketch received 17.08.2020
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy from Encon Associates received 23.02.2021
- Phase 1 Desk Study Report Reference Number: D10076/01 received 02.02.2021
- British Standards 5837:2012 Tree Survey: Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan Report Reference: RSE_4034_01_V1 received 17.08.2020
- Landscape and Ecology Management Plan report reference RSE_4034_02_V2 received 17.08.2020
- Landscape And Visual Appraisal report reference 20.076-01 LVA received 27.01.2021
- Landscaping Plan drawing number 20.076/LA01 Rev C received 27.01.2021
- Letter addressing consultee comments received 22.12.2020
- Noise impact Assessment Rev A received 19.02.2021
- Supporting Planning, Design and Access Statement received 02.09.2020

- Transport Technical Note Rev A Report Reference: A4712 received 22.12.2020

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

3. **Schedule of materials (prior approval)**

No development shall 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 respect the character and appearance of the area. 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). A pre-commencement condition is required because the approved materials will be used throughout construction.

4. **Construction method statement**

No development shall take place until a Construction Method Statement (CMS) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the demolition and construction works shall incorporate and be undertaken in accordance with the approved CMS. The CMS shall include measures for:

- (a) A site set-up plan during the works;
- (b) Parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- (c) Loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- (d) Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- (e) Erection and maintenance of security hoarding including any decorative displays and/or facilities for public viewing;
- (f) Temporary access arrangements to the site, and any temporary hard-standing;
- (g) Wheel washing facilities;
- (h) Measures to control dust, dirt, noise, vibrations, odours, surface water run-off, and pests/vermin during construction;
- (i) A scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works;
- (j) Hours of construction and demolition work;
- (k) Hours of deliveries and preferred haulage routes.

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 construction operations.

5. **Contamination remediation strategy**

No development shall take place until a remediation strategy to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site in respect of the development hereby permitted has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any changes to these components require the written consent of the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall not be carried out except in accordance with the approved strategy. This strategy will include the following components:

- a) A site investigation scheme, based on the preliminary risk assessment to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off-site.
- b) The results of the site investigation and the detailed risk assessment referred to in (a) and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken.
- c) A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in the remediation strategy in (b) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not contribute to, and is not put at unacceptable risk from or adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution in line with paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The site overlies a landfill which has the potential to cause pollution if disturbed. To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors. This condition is applied in accordance with paragraphs 170, 178, 179 and 180 the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policy OVS.5 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007). A pre-commencement condition is required to ensure that adequate investigation and a suitable remediation and monitoring is agreed before it may be implemented throughout the demolition and construction phase.

6. **Construction and Operations Management Plan (Oil Pipeline)**

No development shall take place until a Construction and Operations Management Plan (COMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The COMP shall include a scheme detailing a layout confirming the means of safeguarding the Exolum Pipeline outside of the operational works but within the application boundary, including a zone of potential excavation material, protection of easement, means of communication between the site operator and pipeline authority (including out of hours) and routes free of obstruction to the pipeline, including in the event of an emergency. The approved plan shall be adhered to throughout the construction and operational period. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the COMP as approved.

Reason: To ensure the implementation of a satisfactory Construction and Operations Management Plan (COMP) to ensure access and maintain to the Oil Pipe Line. This condition is applied in accordance with the NPPF, Policy CS5 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

7. **Construction Environmental Management Plan**

No development shall take place (including demolition, ground works, vegetation clearance) until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall include the following:

- (a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities.
- (b) Identification of "biodiversity protection zones".
- (c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements).

- (d) The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features.
- (e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.
- (f) Responsible persons and lines of communication.
- (g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.
- (h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.
- (i) Plan of ecology enhancements.

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: Insufficient detail has been received in the course of the application in regard to how ecology will be protected through the construction period. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policy CS17 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026. A pre-commencement condition is required because the CEMP will need to be adhered to throughout construction.

8. **Sustainable drainage**

No development 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 best practice and the proposed national standards;
- b) Include and be informed by a ground investigation survey which establishes the soil characteristics, infiltration rate and groundwater levels;
- c) Include details of how the existing flood plain will be sustained or mitigated (any measures for loss of flood plain shall not increase flood risk elsewhere);
- d) Include a drainage strategy for surface water run-off from the site that ensures that no discharge of surface water from the site will be directed into the public system;
- e) Include attenuation measures to retain rainfall run-off within the site and allow discharge from the site to an existing watercourse at no greater than Greenfield run-off rates;
- f) Include construction drawings, cross-sections and specifications of all proposed SuDS measures within the site;
- g) Include run-off calculations, discharge rates, infiltration and storage capacity calculations for the proposed SuDS measures based on a 1 in 100 year storm +30% for climate change;
- h) Include pre-treatment methods to prevent any pollution or silt entering SuDS features or causing any contamination to the soil or groundwater;
- i) Ensure any permeable paved areas are designed and constructed in accordance with manufacturers guidelines;
- j) Ensure any permeable areas are constructed on a permeable sub-base material such as Type 3 or reduced fines Type 1 material as appropriate;
- k) Include details of how the SuDS measures will be maintained and managed after completion. These details shall be provided as part of a handover pack for subsequent purchasers and owners of the premises;
- l) 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.

All sustainable drainage measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the use hereby permitted is commenced in accordance with a timetable to be submitted and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority as part of the details submitted for this condition. The sustainable drainage measures shall be maintained in the approved condition thereafter.

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 imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019), Policy CS16 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design – Part 4 Sustainable Design Techniques (June 2006). A pre-commencement condition is required because the SUDs needs to be implemented during construction.

9. No infiltration drainage

No drainage systems for the infiltration of surface water to the ground are permitted other than with the written consent of the Local Planning Authority. Any proposals for such systems must be supported by an assessment of the risks to controlled waters. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not contribute to, and is not put at unacceptable risk from or adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution caused by mobilised contaminants. This is in line with paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework. To protect groundwater quality from water leaching through a historic landfill.

10. 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.

11. Noise mitigation

The permitted use of the site shall not commence until a Noise Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan shall be informed by the recommendations of the Noise Impact Assessment (Rev A, received 19/02/2021). Thereafter, the permitted use shall not take place except in accordance with the approved Plan, or any replacement plans approved by the Local Planning Authority pursuant to this condition.

Reason: To protect future occupiers of the development from excessive noise levels from scaffold hire depot, to ensure a good standard of amenity. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Policy OVS.6 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007), and Quality Design SPD.

12. Parking and turning

The permitted use of the site shall not commence until 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 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007.

13. Electric vehicle charging points

The permitted use of the site shall not commence until two 22kw 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 P1 of the Housing Site Allocations DPD 2006-2026.

14. Cycle parking/storage

The permitted use of the site shall not commence until 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 TRANS1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007), and the Council's Cycle and Motorcycle Advice and Standards for New Development (November 2014).

15. Soft landscaping

All soft landscaping works shall be completed in accordance with the submitted plans, schedule of planting and retention, programme of works and other supporting information including Robing Lines Landscape drawing number 20.076/LA01 rev C dated 7/1/21, within the first planting season following completion of building operations / first use of the site (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: Landscaping is an integral element of achieving high quality design. 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 the Quality Design SPD.

16. Lighting strategy (AONB)

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, isolux contour diagram(s), an operation strategy (e.g. details of any timed operation) 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.

17. Use restriction

The land (as identified on Site Location Plan received 02.09.2020) shall be used solely for the scaffold hire depot, comprising open storage area, ancillary modular office building and ancillary car parking. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 and/or the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) (or any order(s) revoking, re-enacting or modifying those Orders with or without modification), the land shall be used for no other purpose.

Reason: Any other use may not be acceptable on the site due to the compatibility with surrounding land uses, and the potential landscape and visual impact within the AONB. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policies ADPP5, CS13, CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

18. Customer opening hours

The premises shall not be open to customers outside of the following hours:
Mondays to Fridays: 08:00 to 19:00
Saturdays: 08:00 to 18:00
Sundays and public holidays: 08:00 to 13:00

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. Delivery hours

No deliveries shall be taken at or despatched from the site outside the following hours:
Mondays to Fridays: 08:00 to 19:00
Saturdays: 08:00 to 18:00
Sundays and public holidays: 08:00 to 13:00

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. Operating hours (machinery/processes)

No machinery shall be operation or any ancillary industrial processes take place outside of the following hours:
Mondays to Fridays: 8:00 to 19:00
Saturdays: 9:00 to 17:00
Sundays and public holidays: 10:00 to 13:00

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 amplified music**

No amplified or other music shall be played externally on the premises.

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