

Application no: 19/02979/OUTMAJ

Lambourn Parish Council objects to this application.

The building will have a huge visual impact within the North Wessex Downs AONB. The tree planting scheme is not sufficient to mask the mass bulk of the development and, even if maintained and retention enforced, will take years to establish. West Berkshire Council's Landscape Character Assessment describes this area as having a "mosaic" of fields, woodlands and small settlements, but including more open and expansive views. The scale of the application does not fit with this landscape mosaic.

The site is adjacent to part of the Lambourn Woodlands Designated Employment Area, which consists of several, relatively small, sites - a fragmented arrangement fitting the characteristics of the landscape. By building here, the applicant will link two of these sites, making a ribbon of industrial development through the AONB along the narrow, rural Ramsbury Road. It will effectively increase the area of the DEA without proper public consultation, compromising the Consultation on Policy SP21, site EMP5, in the Local Plan Review.

Lambourn Parish Council supports local industry and employment and agrees with the NWD AONB¹ that rural businesses "employ local people, provide services to improve the quality of life, spend money locally, promote community cohesion, and have a smaller environmental footprint (by reducing the transportation of goods from across communities)"

This development is neither small, nor can it be said to promote "local" employment. This application states that (as of November 2019) *possibly* 35 of the current 83 FTE staff live in the WBC area. Others are bussed in from Swindon and Reading and the documents provided imply that the closure of Honda will provide a pool of workers. These employees will not spend money locally.

Local residents are very concerned about the amount of heavy traffic on Ramsbury Road and Ermin Street (B4000). Walker Logistics advertises on its website that "it can now offer online retailers next-day delivery services, seven-days-a-week" and their clients include national and international companies, such as Royal Mail, UPS and DPD. This indicates that the scale of the business is increasing its environmental footprint as well as the number of HGVs visiting the site.

The applicant's Transport Assessment notes that there are "no footways or street lights along Ramsbury Road and Ermin Street". The nearest bus stop is 1.9 km away and "travel by public bus is not considered to be a practical and safe option" The number of parking spaces in the application (a total of 93, notwithstanding car sharing and minibus schemes) demonstrates that employees and clients are expected to use cars. In other words, this location is not sustainable – a view echoed by Planning and Highways Officers, both in comments on this application and the LAM6 site in the HELAA.

Lambourn Parish Council considers this development is unsustainable and the harm done to the AONB is not outweighed by other considerations. It urges you to reject this application.

¹ North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019 - 2014