
Land at the Corner of Wellington Road and Station Road, RG40 2AN

Planning and Heritage Statement

Proposed Erection of 21 Dwellings (Flats)

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Proposed Development

- 1.1.1 This planning statement has been produced to support a full planning application for the erection of 21 dwellings (flats) in a three-storey block at the land at the corner of Wellington Road and Station Road, Wokingham.
- 1.1.2 Wokingham Borough Council are the applicant.
- 1.1.3 The development would deliver 21 affordable flats in total, comprising 18no. x 1Bed 2Person Flats, 1no. x 1Bed 2Person M4(3) flat, 2no. x 2Bed 4Person Flats.
- 1.1.4 In addition to the flats, ancillary accommodation will be provided including a concierge office, integrated bin store and integrated bike store.
- 1.1.5 The development proposes 2 disabled parking bays and 4 visitor parking bays.
- 1.1.6 Full details of the design of the development are set out in the Design and Access Statement.

1.2 Supporting Documents and Plans

- 1.2.1 The following drawings are submitted for consideration/approval:
 - 210806-1000-P01 Site Location Plan
 - 210806-1051-P01 Existing Site Plan
 - 210806-1052-P03 Proposed Site Plan
 - 210806-1200-P03 Proposed Ground Floor Plan
 - 210806-1201-P03 Proposed First Floor Plan
 - 210806-1202-P03 Proposed Ground Floor Plan
 - 210806-1203-P03 Proposed Roof Plan
 - 210806-1204-P02 Proposed Floor Plan
 - 210806-1300 Proposed Elevations
 - 210806-1301-P01 Proposed Elevations
 - 210806-1401-P01 Proposed Sections A+B
 - 210806-1402-P01 Proposed Sections C+D
 - 3786-TLP-XX-XX-DR-L-10001 Landscape Plan
 - 3786-TLP-XX-XX-DR-L-50001 P01 Landscape Details
- 1.2.2 The following documents are submitted in support of the application:
 - This Planning Statement
 - Design and Access Statement (Kendall Kingscott)
 - Ecological Impact Assessment (The Landmark Practice)
 - Biodiversity Net Gain (The Landmark Practice)
 - 3786_BNG Metric_V1 (The Landmark Practice)

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- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Report (Price & Myers)
- Air Quality Assessment (RSK Environment Ltd)
- Noise Impact Assessment (RSK Acoustics)
- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (Avalon Planning and Heritage)
- Transport Statement (Entran Ltd)
- Construction Management Plan (Entran Ltd)
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan (Bosky Trees)
- Sustainability Statement (Eight Versa)
- Daylight and Sunlight Impact Assessment (Eight Versa)
- Interior Daylight Analysis (Eight Versa)
- Dynamic Overheating Analysis (Eight Versa)
- Energy Assessment (Eight Versa)
- Phase 2 Ground Investigation Report (Ground & Water)

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The site is located within Wokingham town centre, on the corner of Wellington Road and Station Road. The site is currently not in use, apart from an area utilised by a car wash which is located to the east of the application site.

Figure 1: Proposed Site Plan



- 2.2 To the north, the site is bounded by Station Road along which are a public house (opposite, to the north) and retail units and residential dwellings extending to the northeast. Wellington Road runs along the south/western boundary of the site, beyond which is the railway line.
- 2.3 The majority of the site comprises hardstanding and grass; apart from the south-east corner of the site where young trees and shrubs are present. A poplar tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order grows within the site boundary.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

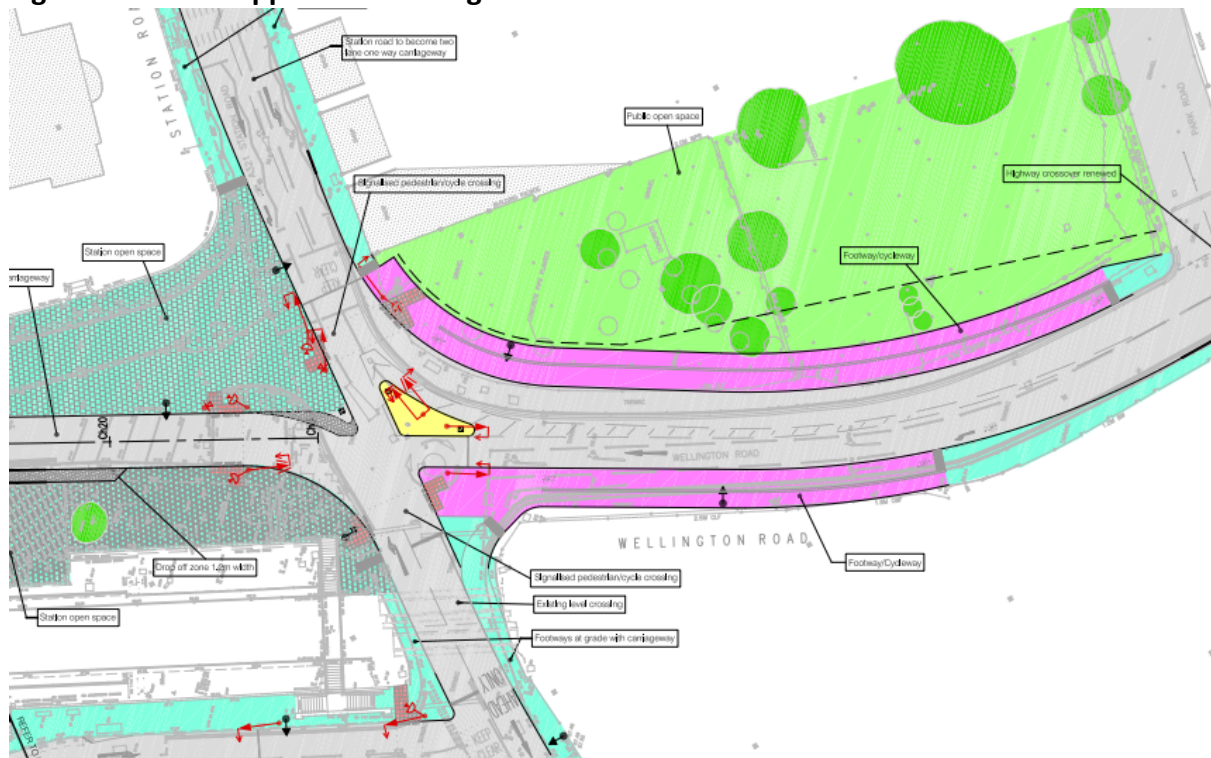
3.1 Application Site

Planning Application Reference: 190370

- Full planning application for the proposed mixed-use development of three storey building comprising 18 self-contained flats, commercial unit, and on-site car parking.
- Application withdrawn 01/07/2019

3.2 Station Approach Re-Configuration

Figure 2: Station Approach Reconfiguration



Planning Application Reference: F/2012/1444

- Demolition of numbers 48 and 50 Reading Road and construction of a single carriageway link road of approximately 336 metres in length connecting the A321 Wellington Road and the A329 Reading Road (part one-way and part two-way operation); provision of a new combined footway and cycleway along the link road, a transport interchange at Wokingham Railway Station, four new traffic signal controlled junctions and associated alterations, landscaping, two noise barriers and provision of new pedestrian crossing facilities.
- Approved 01/02/2013
- Status: Implemented 2014/15
- Notes: The reconfiguration of the highway network at this time included the transfer of land (coloured pink on the plan below – figure 2) to facilitate the

reconfiguration of the alignment of the carriageway and provide the new cycle/footpath on the northern side of Wellington Road.

3.3 46 Station Road – Adjacent Site

Planning Application Reference F/2008/0251

- Erection of 3 flats over existing shop, plus changes to shopfront
- Approved 2008
- Status: Uncertain. Commentary from the LPA received in response to planning application 190370 indicated that the permission may have been commenced for the purposes of the planning permission such that it could still be deliverable without further permissions. However, later commentary from the LPA in 2022 indicated that the permission was not implemented and has since lapsed.
- Notes: Given the uncertain status of the consent, the current development proposal has been designed to accommodate the works to no. 46 should they ultimately come forward. Details of this are set out in the Design and Access Statement submitted in support of the application.

4 PLANNING POLICY AND MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 applications for planning permission are required to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan in force unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.1 Development Plan

The statutory development plan currently in force comprises the Core Strategy (2010) and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014).

4.1.1 **Core Strategy (2010)** - The following policies of the adopted Core Strategy are relevant to the determination of this application:

- Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development)
- Policy CP2 (Inclusive Communities)
- Policy CP3 (General Principles of Development)
- Policy CP4 (Infrastructure Requirements)
- Policy CP5 (Housing Mix, Density and Affordability)
- Policy CP6 (Managing Travel Demand)
- Policy CP7 (Biodiversity)
- Policy CP8 (Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area)
- Policy CP9 (Scale and Location of Development Proposals)
- Policy CP13 (Town Centres and Shopping)
- Policy CP14 (Growth and Renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre)
- Policy CP17 (Housing Delivery)

4.1.2 **Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014)** - The following policies of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan are relevant to the determination of the planning application:

- Policy CC01 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
- Policy CC03 (Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping)
- Policy CC04 (Sustainable Design and Construction)
- Policy CC05 (Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Network)
- Policy CC06 (Noise)
- Policy CC07 (Parking)
- Policy CC10 (Sustainable Drainage)
- Policy TB05 (Housing Mix)
- Policy TB07 (Internal Space Standards)
- Policy TB08 (Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities Standards for Residential Development)
- Policy TB12 (Employment Skills Plan)
- Policy TB15 (Major Town, and Small Town/District Centre Development)
- Policy TB16 (Development for Town Centre Uses)
- Policy TB21 (Landscape Character)

- Policy TB23 (Biodiversity and Development)

4.1.3 Planning Policies Map and Designations:

- The site does not have a specific allocation for development within the Development Plan
- The site falls within the Wokingham Town Centre – the boundary of which is delineated by the railway line to the west (Core Strategy Policy CP13 and MDD Policy TB15). Neither the site nor the adjacent commercial units are identified as primary or secondary shopping frontages.
- Wokingham is a Major Development Location (MDD Policy CC01)
- The site lies within the 7km linear mitigation zone for the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (CS Policy CP8 and MDD Policy SAL05)
- Station Road, Barkham Road and Wellington Road are identified as Green Route Enhancement Areas (MDD Policy CC03)

4.1.4 Adjacent Allocations

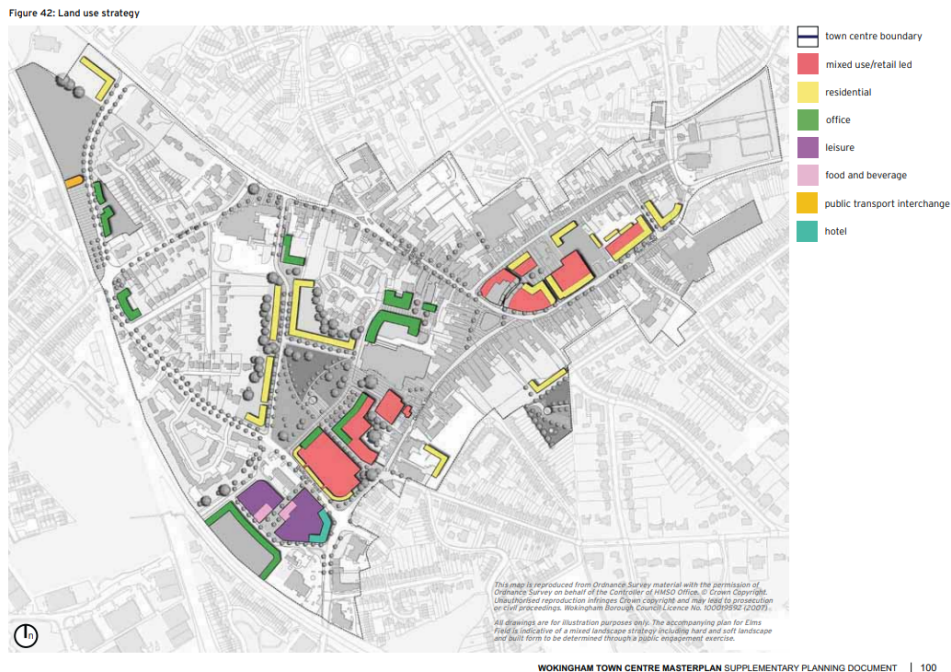
Wokingham Station and Station Approach are an allocated Transport Site – MDD Policy SAL09 - Land at Station Gateway, Wokingham for the delivery of the Reading Road to Wellington Road link (Core Strategy policy CP10 – Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network), works to relocate and rebuild Wokingham Station as a public transport interchange, office provision and ancillary uses including limited A1 (retail) & A3 (restaurants & cafes) uses. Whilst the site allocation does not extend to the application site, part of the application site was taken at the time of the Station Approach works to allow the realignment of Wellington Road and the formation of a cycle/pedestrian footway on the northern side of the carriageway.

Other Material Considerations

4.2 Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan (2010)

- 4.2.1 The Council's vision that guides development in Wokingham Town Centre is set out in the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD (WTC SPD), which recognises the potential for additional apartment schemes within Wokingham Town Centre (section 3.4.18) and seeks to promote town centre living (section 10.6.1). The proposal would be sited within an area identified in the WTC SPD as the Station Gateway character area.
- 4.2.2 The land use strategy of the Town Centre Masterplan identifies the site as a potential office location – see figure 2.

Figure 2: Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan Land Use Strategy

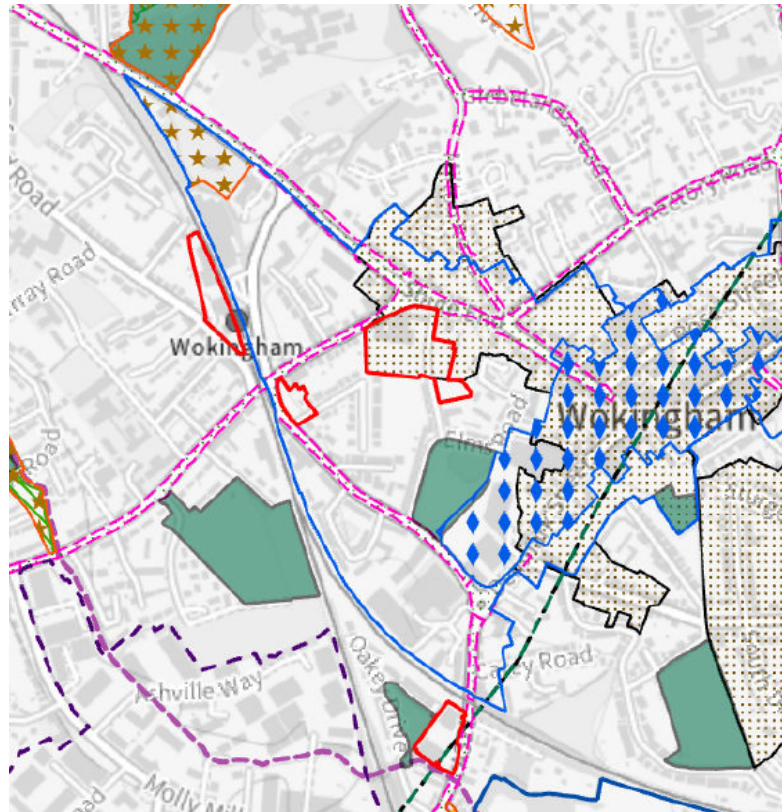


4.2.3 The Town Centre Masterplan also identified the site as within Wokingham's ownership and therefore offering opportunity to improve the quality of the arrival experience and to rationalise the junction movements at the Station entrance. The Masterplan emphasised the need for a public realm approach which encompasses the entire area of the junction in order to distinguish it as a key public space, and to create a real identity for the Station Quarter (Paragraph 12.2.6). The station link road was delivered in 2014/15 and included the transfer of part of the Council land. The remainder the of application site is not therefore still required for the station link works.

4.3 Wokingham's Local Plan Update – Regulation 19 Submission Plan (October 2024)

4.3.1 The application site has been included in the Council's Regulation 19 Submission Plan as a residential allocation under policy SS14 - site SS14.31 and edged red on the plan below – identified with the potential to deliver approximately 20 dwellings.

Figure 3: Local Plan Update Site Allocation



4.3.2 Under the Local Plan up-date the site remains within Wokingham Town Centre (Figure 3 - area edged blue), but outside of both the Primary Shopping Area (blue diamonds) and the conservation area (edged black with brown dots). Station Road, Barkham Road and Wellington Road remain as 'Green Routes'.

4.3.3 Given the implementation of the works, the Wokingham Station and Station Approach Transport Site allocation of the current development plan has also fallen away.

4.4 Other Material Planning Considerations include:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standards
- Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document
- WBC CIL Guidance + 123 List
- WBC Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document
- WBC Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document
- WBC's Climate Emergency Action Plan

5. SCHEME DETAILS AND COMPLIANCE

5.1 Principle of Development

- 5.1.1 The site is located in an extremely sustainable location with good access to public transport and local amenities.
- 5.1.2 The site lies within the Wokingham Town Centre; but is not within the Primary Shopping Area. The site is not allocated for commercial/retail in the development plan (either adopted or emerging) so there is no explicit expectation for the delivery of such uses conferred therein. Provision of residential development is supported by Policy CP14 of the Core Strategy (Growth and Renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre) as one of the uses which, cumulatively with other uses (such as offices, public open space, leisure and services) and infrastructure improvements, would help ensure the growth and renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre.
- 5.1.3 Whilst the Land Use Strategy of the Town Centre Masterplan (2010) identified the site as a potential office location, it is the case that the office market has significantly weakened since that publication in 2010. Moreover, the evidence base underpinning the Council's currently emerging Local Plan Update indicates an oversupply of over 15,000sqm of office floorspace when compared to identified needs. The application site is not therefore required to help meet the office need of the town centre/borough over the draft plan period (2023-2040) and has alternatively been allocated as a residential site in the Council's Regulation 19 Submission Plan (Oct 2024). The Regulation 19 Plan, and the evidence base that underpins it, is a material consideration in the determination of this planning application.
- 5.1.4 The station link road was delivered in 2014/15 and has significantly improved the public realm and quality of arrival experience into Wokingham in line with the expectations conferred by paragraph 12.2.6 of the Town Centre Masterplan. Part of the site was transferred at the time as part of those works to facilitate a realignment to Wellington Road and the creation of a new foot/cycle path along the northern side. The residual land, the site the subject of this planning application, is not therefore still required for the station link works. Notwithstanding, the application site can, and the development proposals do, further enhance the local townscape quality at this important gateway into the town. Full details of the design are included within the Design and Access Statement.

5.2 Affordable Housing

- 5.2.1 Under Core Strategy Policy CP5, a development of 21 dwellings in this Major Development Location would be expected to provide a minimum of 30% affordable housing. In this instance the Council are proposing to utilise subsidy in the form of developer contributions as well as potential funding from Homes England to deliver all 21 of the flats as affordable housing – 100%.

- 5.2.2 At ground floor, 6 x 1 bed flats are proposed for Wokingham Council's Adult Social Care clients which will aim to support vulnerable residents in living independently. A Housing Needs Assessment for Vulnerable Adults carried out by Campbell Tickell in 2023 demonstrated a requirement for 203 properties over the next 10-year period for learning disabled, mental health and physical disabled residents. The flats, together with the support accommodation, will therefore help to fulfil a Wokingham Borough Council identified need for specialist accommodation.
- 5.2.3 Across the upper floors, 13 x 1 bed flats and 2 x 2 bed flats are proposed. This accommodation will be targeted at Care Leavers (6 x 1 bed units) and general needs social housing (7 x 1 bed and 2 x 2 bed units) with a potential priority for key workers. Should there be no care leavers or key workers identified for this scheme at the point of allocation, then the homes would be offered to those waiting on the Housing Register, with prioritisation going to those in the most urgent bands first.
- 5.2.4 All apartments meet national space standards and will need to conform to building regulations M4(2) or M4(3) in relation to dwellings intended for wheelchair use.
- 5.2.5 The development maximises the delivery of affordable housing and supports the objectives set out in the Council's Housing Strategy by providing different housing options to meet identified needs and homes to house our most vulnerable residents. The affordable housing provisions can be secured under a S106 agreement. The development would therefore comply with the planning policies set out in Core Strategy Policies CP1 (Sustainable Development), CP2 (Inclusive Communities), CP5 (Housing Mix) and CP17 (Housing Delivery); together with MDD DPD Policy TB05 (Housing Mix).

5.3 Townscape and Visual Impact

- 5.3.1 The site is located within the 'Station Gateway' character zone in the Town Centre Masterplan (2010) and is allocated for development. The masterplan identifies that the site could accommodate three storeys and should include animation at ground floor together with the use of local materials.
- 5.3.2 The submitted Design and Access Statement evidences how the building and associated landscaping has been designed having full regard to the site/townscape context and taking into account neighbouring uses; including a potential extension to no.46 Station Road. Moreover, the development will provide a high-quality design fully commensurate to this important gateway location into the town. In those circumstances the Local Planning Authority may be satisfied that the development will accord with the relevant design policies of the development plan; namely Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3 and CP14 and MDD DPD Policies CC01 and CC03.

5.4 Highways, Access, and Parking

- 5.4.1 MDD DPD Policy CC07 sets out that planning permission will only be granted where the proposal demonstrates that the scheme retains an appropriate overall level of

off-street parking. Parking standards are thereafter set out in appendix 2 of the plan. The parking standards suggest that an urban development of this size should provide a minimum of 11.7 spaces – more if the spaces are to be allocated. Notwithstanding, the parking standards should, by their own acknowledgement, “be regarded only as a starting point in any discussions with the Council as it should be recognised that each development site will need to be assessed on its own merits, within the wider context of the area in which the development sits”. Indeed, the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan sets out a desire to reduce the level of parking below borough standards.

- 5.4.2 In this instance the site is located in a highly sustainable, town centre location and occupants would have good access to town centre facilities and public transport. Residents therefore need not be as reliant on owning/using a car as they would be in other town fringe, village, or rural locations.
- 5.4.3 In this context the application scheme proposes a predominantly car free development. 2 x blue badge spaces are proposed, together with 4 x visitor parking spaces. No car parking spaces are proposed for the residents. Moreover, future occupiers would need to make an informed decision on whether to occupy the flats balancing the benefits of town centre living against the lack of dedicated parking. Residents would have the option of applying for a season ticket for a public car park in the vicinity, but this would be at their own cost/discretion.
- 5.4.4 In addition to very good access to public transport, the scheme would also provide 22 residential and 2 visitor cycle parking spaces. The development would also be supported by a travel plan and/or make contributions towards the Council’s My Journey Travel Planning Scheme as appropriate. This package of measures would support the provision of car free flats in this location; especially where the precedent for such has already been accepted at other locations within the Town Centre.
- 5.4.5 Deliveries and servicing will be from Park Road or the rear of the site. A servicing management plan for the development can be secured by condition.
- 5.4.6 In light of the above, it is considered that there are no unacceptable conflicts with the transport related policies of the development plan.

5.5 Ecology and Biodiversity

- 5.5.1 The application is accompanied by an Ecological Assessment. The assessment demonstrates that the existing site has limited ecological value.
- 5.5.2 The landscape proposals include new tree, scrub, and hedgerow planting; together with ground level planters and species rich grassland. These measures will help enhance the biodiversity of the site. In any event, the development will be subject to a mandatory requirement to provide a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain. The application proposals are therefore compliant with the ecological related policies of the development plan; namely Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP7.

- 5.5.3 The application site is within 7km of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBH SPA). 21 dwellings is below the threshold where schemes are required to demonstrate adequate avoidance and/or mitigation measures in relation to potential adverse effects on the TBH SPA (Core Strategy Policy CP8).

5.6 Trees and Landscaping

- 5.6.1 There is a category B (Moderate Quality) poplar currently on site that is covered by Tree Preservation Order 514 from 1989. All other trees currently on site are either category C (Low Quality) or U (those in such a condition that they cannot realistically be retained as living trees in the context of the current land use for longer than 10 years).
- 5.6.2 The loss of the trees on site is necessary to facilitate the redevelopment of the site; redevelopment aspirations that are set out in the Town Centre Masterplan and therefore supported by Core Strategy Policy CP14 (Growth and Renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre). Whilst regrettable, the loss is outweighed by the significant public benefits of the of the development and will be largely compensated through the proposed landscaping scheme.

5.7 Sustainability and Energy

- 5.7.1 The development proposals follow a fabric first approach to limit energy usage within the buildings, whilst then providing green energy through Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) and recycling heat with Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery. The inclusion of PVs then ensures energy used is mitigated through the provision of renewable energy sources. Full details are set out in the Energy Strategy that accompanies the application. Through this strategy the development will comply with the relevant sustainability and energy related policies of the development plan.

5.8 Flood Risk and Drainage

- 5.8.1 The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Report. The report identifies that the site is at low risk of flooding.
- 5.8.2 To ensure compliance with the relevant flooding and drainage policies of the development plan, it is intended that surface water will be attenuated using a combination of permeable paving and a cellular attenuation tank which will restrict discharge from the site into the Thames Water surface water public sewer. This discharge rate will be the limit for all events up to and including the 1 in 100-year rainfall plus 40% climate change allowance. In addition, rainwater butts and a green roof are also proposed; which provide additional water use, amenity, and biodiversity benefits.
- 5.8.3 In terms of foul water, a new network will be constructed to serve the site with a new direct connection to the foul water public sewer.

5.9 Contamination

- 5.9.1 The application is accompanied by a Phase 2 Ground Investigation Report (Ground & Water). The Investigation did not identify any risk of contamination that could not be suitably mitigated.

5.10 Noise

- 5.10.1 MDD DPD Policy CC06 (Noise) identifies that proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed noise impacts. In this regard the application is accompanied by a Noise Impact Assessment. The report demonstrates that the development will not unacceptably harm the noise environments of neighbouring properties. In addition, appropriate internal noise environments in line with relevant British Standards can be achieved for all the new dwellings.

5.11 Air Quality

- 5.11.1 Core Strategy Policy CP1 identifies that development should avoid areas where pollution may impact upon the amenity of future occupants. In this regard it should be noted that the site is **not** located within an Air Quality Management Area – as identified on WBC's Policies and Constraints Map.
- 5.11.2 Notwithstanding, an Air Quality Assessment has been submitted to support the application. The assessment concludes that with appropriate mitigation the proposed development will comply with the relevant national and local planning policies and that there are no air quality constraints for the development proposal.

5.12 Construction Management

- 5.12.1 A Construction Management Plan has been submitted with the application. This document can form the basis for managing construction activities on site to minimise their local impact. Following appointment of a contractor, the document can be refined for submission/approval in advance of any works commencing on site.
- 5.12.2 It is also anticipated that the hours of construction will be controlled by planning condition to prevent such activities at anti-social hours.
- 5.12.3 Through these measures the impacts of the development during the construction can be managed/minimised to prevent unacceptable impacts upon the amenity of neighbouring residents and or the safety/function of the highway network.

5.13 Employment Skills Plan

- 5.13.1 Under MDD DPD Policy TB12, a major development of this nature would require the implementation of an Employment Skills Plan during the construction period; such plan to encourage the use of local labour and to ensure that local people have the

skills and opportunities to compete for local jobs. It is anticipated that an Employment Skills Plan would be secured by way of a planning condition.

- 5.13.2 The Project Team and Contractors (when appointed) will work with the Council's Employment and Skills Service to best tailor the Employment Skills Plan to optimise the benefit from the opportunities presented by the development. The local employment opportunities as will be provided offer a positive public benefit that weighs in favour of the development.

6. HERITAGE STATEMENT

- 6.1 Core Strategy Policy CP3 identifies that planning proposals should not have a detrimental impact upon important heritage. MDD DPD Policy TB24 identifies that the Council will conserve and seek the enhancement of designated heritage assets and their settings. MDD DPD Policy TB25 seeks to protect archaeological interests.
- 6.2 The site does **not** sit within a Conservation Area. Neither are there any listed buildings on site.
- 6.3 The footbridge immediately south of Wokingham Station (on the opposite side of the junction to site) is Grade II listed. The new building would be seen in the periphery of kinetic views of the bridge when approaching from all directions. However, being located on the opposite side of the junction, the new building would be sufficiently distant/separate from the bridge such that it would have no detrimental impact upon the character, appearance or setting of the bridge as it is currently experienced within the wider streetscape. If anything, the townscape improvements resultant from the development on this important gateway into the town centre would positively impact the setting of the Grade II listed bridge.
- 6.4 With respect to archaeology, the site does **not** fall within an Archaeological Site nor within an Archaeological Site Consultation Zone as identified on WBC's Policies and Constraints Map. In addition, the Archaeological Assessment submitted in support of the application concludes that "the proposed works represent a very low risk of impacts to archaeology and would not affect any heritage assets of more than limited local interest." In those circumstances no further archaeological works or investigations are considered necessary.
- 6.5 It can therefore be concluded that the development will have no unacceptable impacts upon heritage assets of importance such that Core Strategy Policy CP3 and MDD DPD Policies TB24 and TB25 are satisfied.

7. PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The application site is located within a very sustainable location towards which the Local Plan directs new development. The delivery of affordable housing on this site to meet identified need represents a substantial public benefit; as does the significant townscape improvements that would result on an important gateway site that has long been earmarked for development in the Town Centre Masterplan. These matters weigh heavily in favour of approving the development.
- 7.2 There would also be associated economic benefits in terms of job creation during construction, local spending, and biodiversity net gains.
- 7.3 Moreover, the development is in conformity with both the adopted and emerging local plans and there are no material planning considerations of significant weight that dictate that the application should otherwise be refused.