

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242049
Site Address:	Travis Perkins Site, Woodley Green, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 4QP
Expiry Date:	15 November 2024
Site Visit Date:	16/08/2024
Proposal: Application to vary condition 2 of planning consent 233168 for the proposed erection of a building to form a residential care home (Use Class C2) with access, parking, landscaping and associated works, following demolition of all existing buildings on the site. Condition 2 refers to the approved details and the variation is to reposition and amend the frontage of the building to accommodate manhole access.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Major Development Location
Potentially Contaminated Land

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP2 – Inclusive Communities CP3 – General Principles for Development CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP15 – Employment Development
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB05 – Housing Mix TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB08 – Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities Standards TB12 – Employment Skills Plan Retail Use

	TB21 – Landscape Character TB22 – Sites of Urban Landscape Value TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation DM3 - Protection of Habitats and Species DM4 - Protection of Designated Landscape DM5 - Protection of the Countryside DM6 - Green Belt DM7 - Conserving the Historic Environment DM8 - Restoration of Minerals and Waste Developments DM9 - Protecting Health, Safety and Amenity DM10 - Flood Risk DM11 - Water Resources DM12 - Sustainable Transport Movements DM13 - High Quality Design of Minerals and Waste Development DM14 - Ancillary development DM15 - Site History
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance Woodley Design Statement

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
F/2004/1923	Proposed erection of a detached storage building.	Approved – 19/07/2004
C/2009/1253	Application for submission of details to comply with conditions 3 and 4 of planning consent F/2009/0333 (3 - Boundary Treatment and 4 – Samples and details of materials to be used).	Replied – 01/12/2009
231871	Full application for the proposed erection of a building to form a residential care home (use class C2) with access, parking, landscaping and associated works, following demolition of all existing buildings on the site.	Refused – 30/11/2023
233168	Full application for the proposed erection of a building to form a residential care home (Use Class C2) with access, parking, landscaping and associated works, following demolition of all existing buildings on the site.	Approved – 05/06/2024

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No objection.
 WBC Drainage – No objection.

WBC Highways – Request amendments.
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection.
WBC Ecology – No response received.
WBC Built Heritage Officer – No objection.
WBC Cleaner and Greener – No response received.

External

Thames Water Utilities Ltd
Berkshire Archaeology – No objection.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No objection.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description and History:

The site is an existing commercial plot of approximately 0.35 hectares with multiple single and two-storey flat-roofed buildings and extensive hardstanding that covers most of the plot. It is located adjacent to but outside of Headley Road East Core Employment Area. It is also located within the settings of Woodley Green Conservation Area and Grade II Listed Bull & Chequers public house. The site is accessed from Woodley Green which branches from Church Road carriageway. Surrounding developments include residential properties along the east and north; Headley Road East commercial complex to the south and BT Telephone Office to the west with the Bull & Chequer's parking area adjoining the north-western side of the access road.

There is an extant planning permission for a new care home on the site. Due to the discovery of a water main and the need to provide adequate separation from this, the current application seeks to vary the approved plans in order to move the front section of the building approximately 1.5 metres to the east, as shown on the below site plan (existing approval outlined in blue):



Figure 1: Proposed site plan (existing approval outlined in blue).

Below are two elevation plans, showing the existing approval and the new proposal:



North - Colour

Figure 2: Northern elevation of existing approval.



North - Colour
1 : 100

Figure 3: Revised scheme.

Principle of Development:

The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The proposal was considered acceptable in principle when assessed under the original application. This included impacts in terms of employment, housing land supply and care home need. In the context of the overall planning balance, the scheme was considered acceptable in principle. The scheme is still extant and nothing has changed to impact the in principle acceptability of the scheme. It is therefore still acceptable in this regard.

Character of the Area:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high-quality design. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires developments to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF requires that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping, and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. Paragraph 134 states that development that is not well designed should be refused.

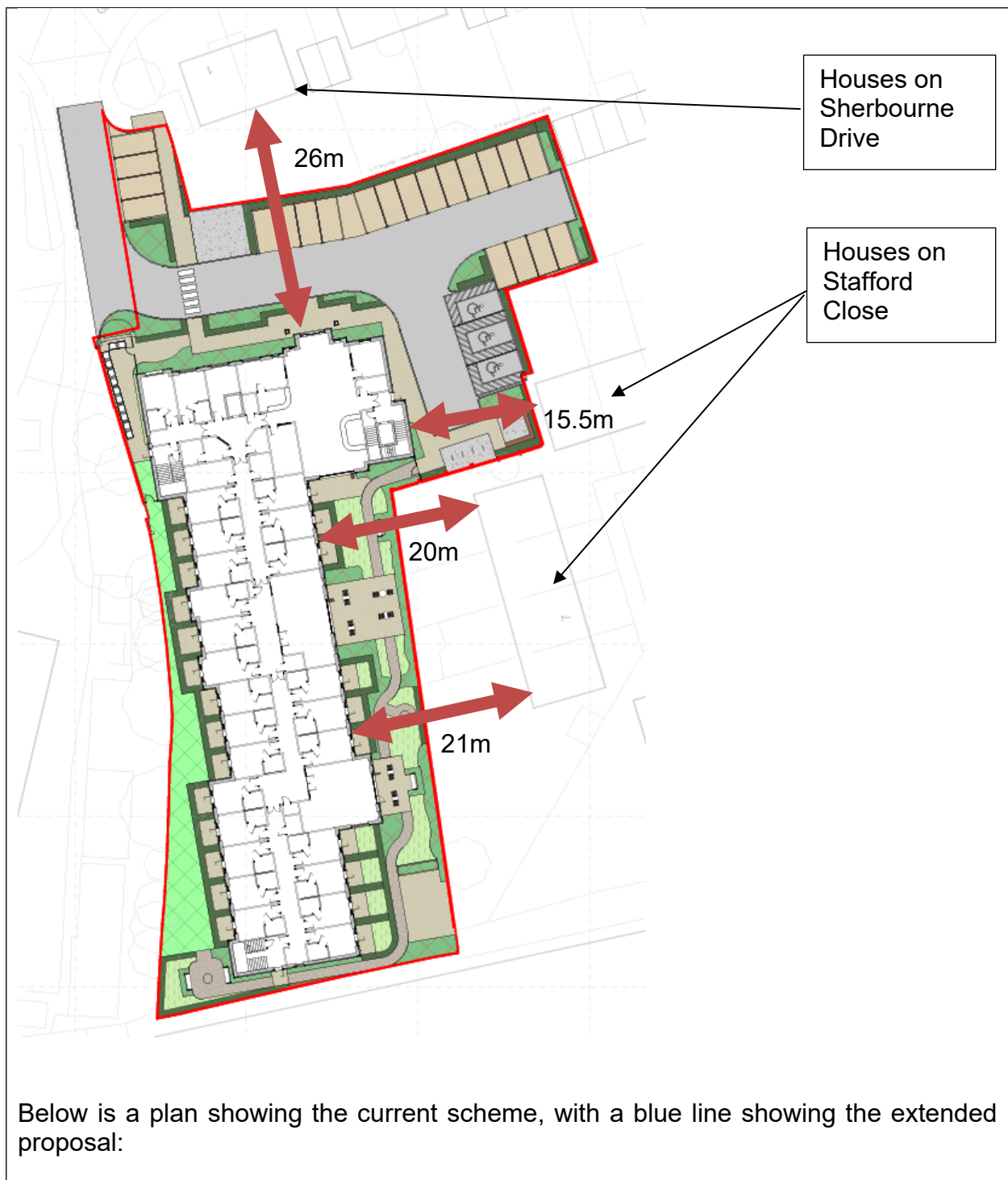
The National Design Guide (2021) ("NDG") provides general good practice guidance for planning new development. The NDG alongside the Wokingham Borough Design Guide ("BDG") provides useful guidance in considering design, scale, bulk and mass. Paragraph 59 of the NDG states "Where the scale or density of new development is very different to the existing place, it may be more appropriate to create a new identity rather than to scale up the character of an existing place in its context. New character

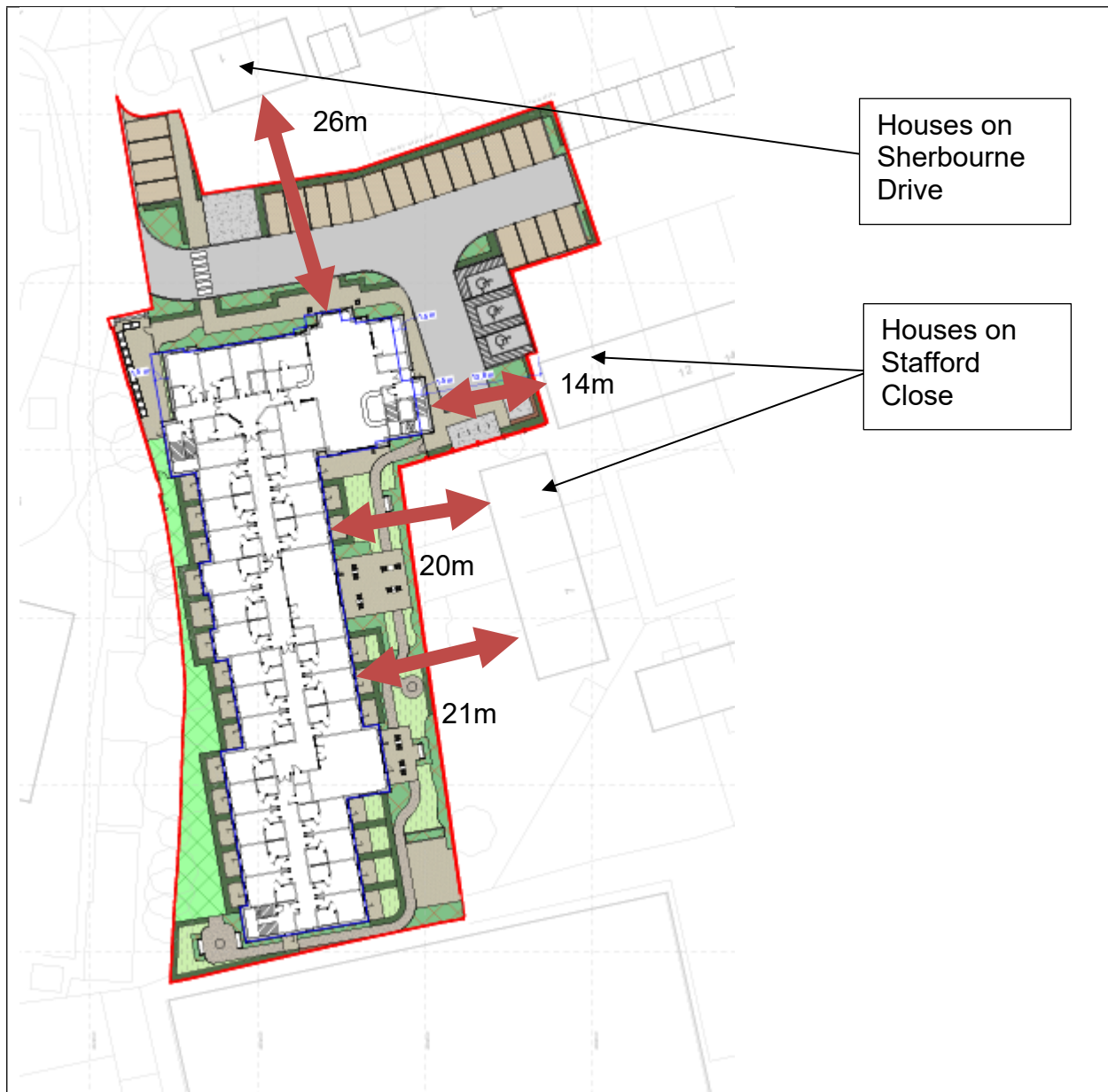
may also arise from a response to how today's lifestyles could evolve in the future, or to the proposed method of development and construction."

As can be seen from the elevation plans shown earlier in the report, the proposed changes are minimal in terms of their impacts on the appearance of the development. Overall, adjusting the design of the building does not significantly alter the impact of the proposal on the character of the area. It is therefore acceptable in this regard.

Neighbouring Amenity:

The relationship of the proposed building with neighbouring properties was a significant consideration in the assessment of the original scheme. This was primarily due to the scale of the building and its proximity to neighbours. A previous iteration of the scheme (231871) was refused due to impacts on neighbours. Therefore it is important to assess the proposed changes carefully. A site plan of the approved scheme is shown below, with neighbours and relevant separation distances shown:





As shown above, the eastwards projecting section on the northern end of the building is 1.5m closer to the side elevation of the houses on Stafford Close. Otherwise, there are no other changes to the scheme, including in the internal layout.

The assessment of the approved scheme raised concerns that the recommended distances, as recommended in the Borough Design Guide, were not adhered to. However, on balance, it was concluded that the scheme would be acceptable in terms of impact on neighbours, subject to a number of conditions requiring mitigation to potential overbearing and overlooking impacts. These particularly related to outside terraces which would be installed on the eastern side of the building, in an elevated position compared to neighbouring gardens.

The proposal would bring part of the development into closer proximity to houses on Stafford Close, thus materially increasing the potential overbearing impact. On both numbers 9 and 10 Stafford Close. Number 10 sits to the east, with its side elevation facing the development. Number 9 sits to the south and east, with its rear elevation

facing the development. It is noted that reducing the separation distance from 15.5m to 14m from the side elevation of number 10 would reduce the distance to below that recommended by the Borough Design Guide, which recommends a 15m back to flank (most appropriate in this instance) separation distance for a 3 storey building. While this is not ideal. The rear facing windows and rear garden of number 10 would still have an open aspect to the rear. On balance, the reduction in separation distance would not result in sufficient harm to the occupants of this dwelling to substantiate a reason to refuse this application. It is also noted that no objections have been received from the residents, although this is not determinative on its own.

With regards number 9, the building would have an increased overbearing impact on the garden and rear facing windows. However, the increase in massing would overall be minimal in the overall context of the scheme and would not result in sufficient harm to result in refusal of this application.

As the internal layout and external appearance of the building (including locations of windows and outside terraces) remains the same, all previously attached conditions are still relevant and there is no need to impose an additional conditions mitigating neighbouring impacts.

Given the above, on balance, the proposed amendments to the scheme are acceptable.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

Core Strategy policy CP6 relates to managing travel demand. It states the following: Planning permission will be granted for schemes that:

- a) Provide for sustainable forms of transport to allow choice;
- b) Are located where there are or will be at the time of development choices in the mode of transport available and which minimise the distance people need to travel;
- c) Improve the existing infrastructure network, including road, rail and public transport, enhance facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, including provision for those with reduced mobility, and other users;
- d) Provide appropriate vehicular parking, having regard to car ownership;
- e) Mitigate any adverse effects upon the local and strategic transport network that arise from the development proposed;
- f) Enhance road safety; and
- g) Do not cause highway problems or lead to traffic related environmental problems.

CC07 of the MDD Local Plan relates to Parking. It requires that planning permission is only granted where the proposal demonstrates that it meets the Borough Parking Standards and that the scheme retains an overall level of off-street parking.

The proposal does not impact the requirement for parking or cycle storage, nor are the provisions for these altered by the scheme. The Council's Highways Officer has indicated that the footpath on the eastern side of the building (providing access to the garden) would be reduced and therefore impacting garden access. They consider that,

because the nearby disabled parking spaces would receive relatively low use, they should be changed to a shared surface so that access can be maintained to the garden.

This is acknowledged, however it is considered that access would still be maintained to the garden, even though the access would be narrower. The impact on access is very minimal and this would not constitute a reason to refuse this application. It is therefore acceptable in this regard.

Amenity Space:

CP3 of the Core Strategy indicates that planning permission will be granted for proposals that provide for a 'functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable scheme'. The Borough Design Guide indicates that new housing must provide easy access to some form of amenity space. While it does not provide guidance relating specifically to care homes the requirement for outside space is established. The proposed outside amenity space would remain narrow in places; however it would provide good access to the outdoors for activities such as communal activities, sitting and exercise. It is considered that there is an acceptable level of outdoor amenity space to serve the intended residents and the proposal is acceptable in this regard.

Flooding and Drainage:

CC09 of the MDD Local Plan relates to development and flood risk. CC10 relates to sustainable drainage. The application site is in flood zone 1, representing a low risk of flooding. The Council's Flood Risk and Drainage Officer has no objection to the scheme, subject to conditions requiring a SuDS maintenance strategy to be submitted. This is acceptable and necessary. There are no changes to the scheme which impact drainage or the attached conditions.

Landscape and Trees:

CC03 of the MDD Local Plan states:

Development proposals should demonstrate how they have considered and achieved the following criteria within scheme proposals:

- a) Provide new or protect and enhance the Borough's Green Infrastructure networks, including the need to mitigate potential impacts of new development
- b) Promote accessibility, linkages and permeability between and within existing green corridors including public rights of way such as footpaths, cycleways and bridleways
- c) Promote the integration of the scheme with any adjoining public open space or countryside
- d) Protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features
- e) Incorporate high quality, ideally, native planting and landscaping as an integral part of the scheme.

Development proposals which would result in the loss, fragmentation or isolation of areas of green infrastructure will not be acceptable.

There are a number of unprotected trees around the site. An updated tree protection scheme is required and this can be dealt with by condition and this is supported by the Council's Trees and Landscapes Officer.

Ecology:

CP7 of the Core Strategy relates to Biodiversity. TB23 of the MDD Local Plan relates to Biodiversity and development. There is nothing in this application which changes the potential impact of the scheme on biodiversity. The existing condition requiring the submission of a European protected species license will remain in place.

Archaeology:

There are potential archaeological implications with this proposed development as demonstrated by Berkshire Archaeology's Historic Environment Record. The site lies in an area where Pre-lithic evidence has been discovered, including a Mesolithic tranche axe from a gravel pit c.630m southeast and Neolithic knife c.290m northeast, along with further evidence in the wider area. The recent geotechnical investigation boreholing has identified that there are sand and gravel river terrace deposits on site, which were often favoured for activity in the Prehistory. The site appears to have remained undeveloped agricultural land until the 1960s, therefore it is possible that any remains may not have been subjected to multiple impacts and may be relatively undisturbed.

Berkshire Archaeology have no objections to the proposed variations and therefore the scheme is acceptable in this regard.

Sustainability:

WBC Core Strategy Policy CP1 requires that developments "12) Contribute towards the goal of reaching zero-carbon developments as soon as possible by: a) Including appropriate on-site renewable energy features; and b) Minimising energy and water consumption by measures including the use of appropriate layout and orientation, building form, design and construction, and design to take account of microclimate so as to minimise carbon dioxide emissions through giving careful consideration to how all aspects of development form."

Policy CC04 part 2 a) of the managing development delivery local plan requires that "All new non-residential proposals of more than 100 sq m gross non-residential floorspace shall at least: a) Achieve the necessary mandatory Building Research Establishment Assessment Method (BREEAM) requirements or any future national equivalent."

The previous scheme was reviewed by the Council's Sustainability Planning Officer. The revised scheme does not impact the sustainability of the proposal and is acceptable subject to conditions requiring a scheme providing a 10% reduction in carbon emissions and accordance with BREEAM standards.

Employment Skills Plan:

MDD Local Plan Policy TB12 requires that major development should be accompanied by an Employment and Skills plan to show how the proposals accord with opportunities for training, apprenticeship or other vocational initiatives to develop local employability skills required by developers, contractors or end users of the proposal. This can also be secured by planning obligation and this is required in this instance. This was secured by s106 agreement, which will need to be varied to apply to the current scheme. This has been completed and is therefore acceptable.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010):

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	13 November 2024
Earliest date for decision:	12 September 2024

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	15/11/24