



PLANNING & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Planning & Transport Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Council Offices, Radstock Lane, Earley on Tuesday 16th December 2025 which commenced at 7.00pm.

Present:

Chair – Councillor A Neal

Councillors: N Brock, R Browne, R Cook, D Hare, S Jordan and M Smith.

In attendance: E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk), W Luck (Advisor to Planning Committee), Councillor Bassett, Councillor Long and 2 members of the public.

131. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M De Jong, M Iyengunmwena, P Jorgensen and C Smith.

132. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M Smith declared that, as a member of Wokingham Borough Council’s Planning Committee, he would keep an open mind when considering the planning applications at this meeting based on the information before him and may later amend his view if further relevant information is presented to him.

133. PUBLIC FORUM

Councillor Neal informed members of the members of the public present that Earley Town Council is statutory consultee and can make recommendations on planning applications to Wokingham Borough Council, who are the local planning authority and decision maker.

He added, that prior to the meeting, the members of the Planning & Transport Committee had viewed the plans and documentation submitted with the application and would take a balanced view on the applications, taking into consideration the details of the proposals, comments from members of the public and the Town Council’s planning advisor.

A member of the public raised concerns about both applications in relation to the increase in traffic from the development, which will impact local roads in Earley. Living in Earley for 27 years, the member of the public reported that she experiences issues with current levels of traffic on a regular basis which is unbearable and is made worse when there are issues on the A329(M) or M4. Concerns were also raised about how the increase in traffic levels will impact Loddon Valley Police Station and emergency service response times getting through roads that are already congested.

The member of the public expressed that she appreciates that development has to happen but that investment in the infrastructure always comes after the development.

134. PLANNING APPLICATION 252498

Councillors discussed planning application 252498 – Hall Farm, Church Lane, Arborfield, RG2 9HX.

Councillors agreed that development will happen and that there were some positives to the proposed development such as schools, shops, community facilities and an Eco Valley, which aims to give provision to residents living there and reduce the need to travel further afield.

However, Councillors raised several concerns: -

Traffic

With a development such as this the issue is that the infrastructure and community provisions comes after a great number of properties are built, which then results in residents having to travel from the development out to other areas.

This will mean more traffic travelling into and through Earley from the development which will impact the roads in Earley, some of which already experience congestion on a daily basis due to traffic levels and even more so when there is flooding at the Showcase roundabout due to heavy rain or if there is an issue on the A329(M) or M4.

Lower Earley Way will be the road most affected, with a knock-on effect to other local roads such as Meldreth Way and Carshalton Way, which are at risk of becoming rat-runs with traffic using those roads as travel routes. Some of the junctions on both roads are difficult to exit due to sightlines and speeding traffic, so with increased traffic, this raises concerns in view of highway safety.

As the plan to alleviate issues around traffic is to create two lanes on Lower Earley Way going east from the Shinfield Arms Roundabout to the Moat House Hotel, even with an additional lane, the road will be extremely busy, especially at peak times. As a result, it will make it harder for drivers to exit onto Lower Earley Way, raising further highway safety concerns. The proposed bridge over the M4 will encourage traffic in the direction of Earley and again will add to traffic levels and as it will be several years before this is built, Lower Earley Way will see the brunt of traffic for many years.

Whilst traffic modelling has been carried out, the data produced is inadequate and Councillors agreed that it was unlikely that the data had taken into consideration all routes within Earley that could be impacted.

Drainage

Councillors raised concerns about the inadequacy of the foul water drainage.

Design

Councillors agreed that the proposed 5 storey buildings within the development will mean that the concept of a ‘garden village’ will be lost and that 5 storey buildings will be out of keeping with what is perceived as a garden village.

Flooding

When there is flooding at Showcase roundabout, this causes congestion on Lower Earley Way and other roads in Earley. Councillors agreed that more reassurance was needed that current flooding levels will not be negatively impacted.

Community provisions

With plans to include shops, schools, health care and community facilities, the issue is that these provisions will be built after properties on the development are occupied. This will mean

that residents will need to access things such as schools, doctor surgeries etc until such time provisions are available within the development. Therefore, residents will have no option but to use provisions outside the development, which will impact on resources in other local areas.

Reference has also been made to a cemetery provision but Councillors expressed concerns that having land designated as burial land is not the same as having land approved as burial land, as approval on burial land will be subject to various surveys and consideration will have to be given to groundwater pollution.

135. PLANNING APPLICATION 252769

Councillors discussed application 252769 – Land North of Mole Road & Church Lane, Newlands Farm, RG2 9JD and agreed that the same comments and concerns applied to this application, as per application 252498.

136. RECOMMENDATION

It was **RESOLVED** that the Planning & Transport Committee would defer its recommendation decision on both applications. A recommendation response to the applications will be drafted by the Chair based on the meeting’s discussion and will be brought to the Planning & Transport Committee meeting on 13th January 2026 to be agreed.

137. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8.27pm.

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Chair, Planning & Transport Committee