

## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES READING BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 29 <sup>th</sup> June 2016	ITEM NO. 14
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Ward: Out of Borough

App No.: 161054 (West Berkshire Council ref 16/01240/OUTMAJ)

Address: Burghfield Sailing Club, Hangar Road, Sulhamstead

Proposal: Outline planning application for a residential development of up to 225 homes with associated infrastructure including flood alleviation works, drainage works, new buildings to house sailing facilities with associated access and parking, works to the bridge over the Kennet and Avon Canal, means of access, footways, amenity green space, landscaping and other related works. All matters reserved except access.

Applicant: Berfeld Ltd

Date received: 8 June 2016

Major Application: West Berkshire 13 week target decision date: 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016

### RECOMMENDATION:

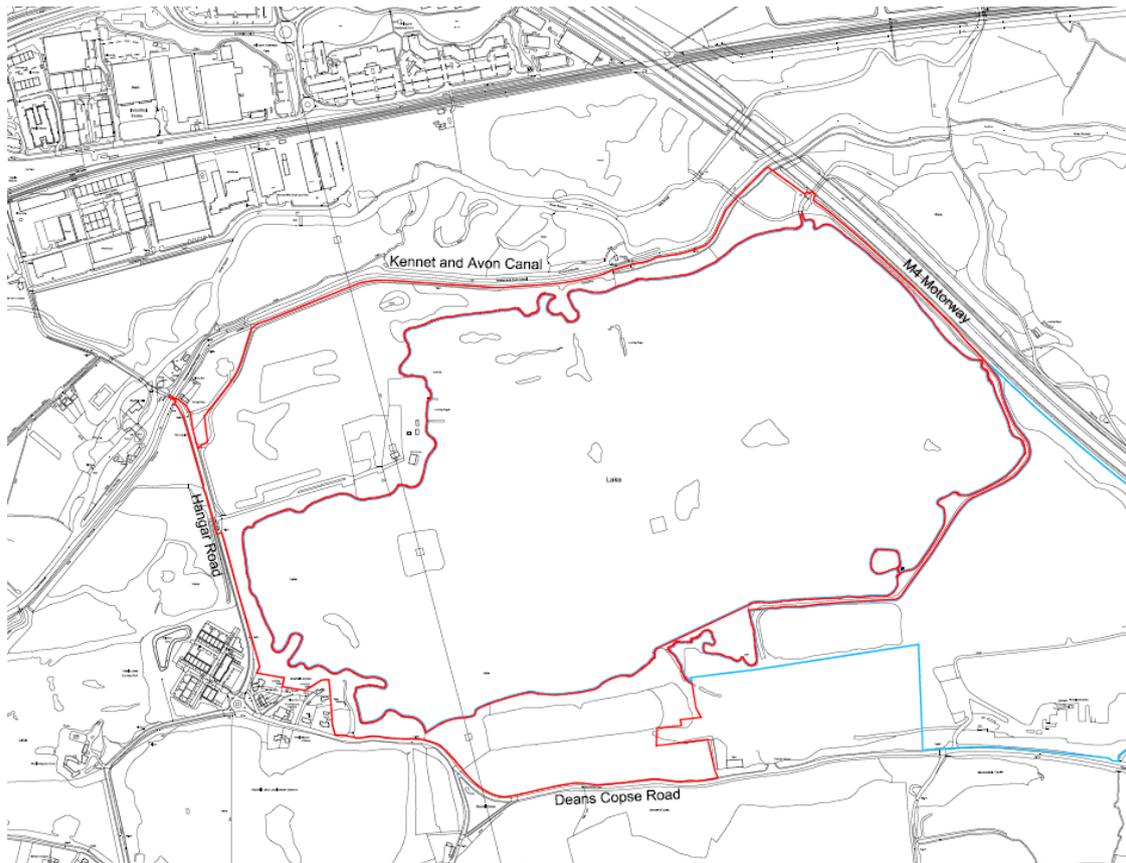
That West Berkshire Council be informed that Reading Borough Council OBJECT to the proposal on the grounds that it has not been adequately demonstrated that there would be no adverse flood effects on Reading Borough.

That the above objection be withdrawn if the objections submitted by the Environment Agency on flood risk grounds are satisfactorily addressed.

That West Berkshire Council is sent a copy of this report for their information and use.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Council have been consulted by West Berkshire Council for a development for up to 225 homes and a new sailing club on the Burghfield Sailing Club site, located next to the lake close to Theale station and M4 Junction 12. The site currently contains the sailing club and associated hardstanding areas, together with undeveloped land (formerly gravel extraction and now restored). The proposal comprises 201 conventional homes, along with 24 lakeside 'can-float' homes.



**Site Location Plan**

## **2. PROPOSAL**

2.1 The proposal is for a development at the western side of Theale Lake, just south of Theale and 2.5 km south west of the Reading Borough boundary. The outline proposal is for 225 homes, a new sailing club, and associated works. The main elements of the proposal are as follows:

- 201 conventional homes (156 market and 45 affordable)
- 24 'Can-Float' homes along the lakeside
- A replacement sailing club building
- A new lift bridge over the Kennet and Avon Canal on Hangar Road/Station Road to replace the existing swing bridge; and
- Flood mitigation measures by carrying out improvements to water management and using Theale Recreational Lake as a flood attenuation cell.

2.2 The site has not been identified for development in West Berkshire's Local Plan.

## **3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

No relevant planning history on this site dealt with by Reading Borough Council.

#### 4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 WBC has carried out its own consultations. RBC's consultation responses are outlined below

4.2 **RBC Transport Development Control:**

The proposed development consists of the outline application with all matters reserved except access for residential development and comprising up to 225 dwellings.

The site is located adjacent to Hangar Road approximately 1.2 kilometres to the south of Theale village centre. Hangar Road provides a connection to Theale village centre and the A4 via Station Road to the north. To the south, Hangar Road provides a connection to Sheffield Bottom and onwards to Reading.

It is calculated that this site would generate 120 vehicle trips in the weekday AM Peak and PM Peak hours and in the region of 1000 vehicle movements across a typical day. Whilst the site is located within the administrative authority of West Berkshire, it is likely that the proposals would generate additional trips on to Reading's transport network for employment and leisure purposes.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires new development to take into account sustainable transport, giving people a real choice how they travel, maximising the use of sustainable transport modes. The applicant has proposed a Community Bus Service (CBS) which would link the site with Theale which is served by Jetblack bus routes 101, 104 and 105. However, opportunities to extend the community service to the large retail site at Calcot should be considered which would provide key connections to Premier Bus Route 26 with services directly to Reading Town Centre every 10 minutes during peak hours. This would provide a real alternative to the private car for residents travelling into central Reading.

The proposed footway improvements will provide a direct pedestrian link to Theale rail station and beyond thereby increasing the accessibility of the site and improving connections to central Reading and transport interchanges.

In summary, it is unlikely that the proposal would result in a material impact on the safety and efficiency of Reading's transport network given the likely increase in peak hour movements and anticipated traffic distribution. However, an enhanced bus service connection to the large retail site at Calcot is supported by Reading Borough Council.

Please therefore advise West Berkshire Council that we have no objections to the proposal.

#### 5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

- 5.2 The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Planning Guidance  
National Planning Policy Framework

West Berkshire Local Development Framework  
West Berkshire Core Strategy (adopted 2012)  
Saved Policies from the West Berkshire Local Plan 1991-2006

## 6. APPRAISAL

- 6.1 The main issues of potential significance to RBC are in terms of transport and flood risk.

### (i) Transport Implications

- 6.2 Given the measures proposed to improve access to sustainable transport, RBC's Transport Development Control have raised no objection to the proposal, but have commented that an enhanced bus service connection to the large retail site at Calcot is supported. No objection on transport grounds is therefore necessary.

### (ii) Flood risk

- 6.3 Despite the lakeside location, the majority of the site is in Flood Zone 1, the area at lowest risk of flooding. This includes all of the 201 conventional homes. However, parts of the site are within Flood Zone 3, including much of the area for the 'can-float' homes and part of the sailing centre. The footprint of the sailing centre would actually reduce, therefore allowing greater flood storage.
- 6.4 The applicant has provided a Flood Risk Assessment as part of the Environmental Statement. This assesses flood risk on the site, and comes to the conclusion that, with the flood attenuation measures proposed, there would be a reduction in flood risk as a result of the proposal. The Council is not in a position to undertake a detailed review of the technical details of that assessment.
- 6.4 However, it should be noted that the Environment Agency has objected to the development on a number of grounds. The grounds that relate to the vulnerability of the development to flooding are a matter for West Berkshire to consider. However, the concerns that the EA have expressed about the effects of the part of the development in Flood Zone 3 (the 'can-float' homes and the sailing centre) and flood alleviation measures on water flows are of significance to Reading.
- 6.5 The main objection from the EA that is of relevance to Reading Borough is that the submitted FRA does not form a suitable basis for assessing the flood risks arising from the proposed development. The reasons for this are that the FRA fails to:
- Assess the impacts of climate change using appropriate climate change allowances. The proposed flood risk mitigation measures are based on the previous allowances for climate change. The applicant has not taken into consideration the new climate change allowances published by the government on 19 February 2016. Consequently the proposed development will potentially increase flood risk.

Inadequate assessment and information has been submitted relating to:

- Flood defences
- Flood storage compensation
- Raised Finished floor levels
- Resistance and resilience measures

- Assess the risks relating to the proposed management of the floodplain via manual intervention associated with the operation of the proposed adjustable weir. The FRA should identify appropriate measures for managing the mechanism and ensuring its' viability and maintenance in perpetuity.
- Demonstrate that hydraulic modelling completed to support the proposed application and flood mitigation measures is 'fit for purpose'. Without a detailed model review it has not been demonstrated that the proposed flood mitigation works and measures are feasible and correct.

6.6 The concerns raised by the EA have implications for the wider floodplain, potentially including areas within Reading. Any worsening of flood risk within Reading Borough is a substantial cause for concern.

6.7 It is noted that the applicant has provided additional modelling information on flooding, which the EA is currently considering. No further response from the EA has been submitted as a result of that modelling at the time of preparing this report.

6.8 It is therefore recommended that Reading make an objection to the planning application on the grounds of effects on flood risk to underline the EA's objection. If the EA can be satisfied by the submission of further information or by changes to the details of the scheme, it is further recommended that RBC's objection be withdrawn.

## 7. CONCLUSION

7.1 It is recommended that RBC object to this proposal on the basis that the submitted Flood Risk Assessment does not currently give grounds to conclude that there would be no adverse effects on the wider floodplain as a result of the proposed development and flood alleviation measures. It is further recommended that this objection be withdrawn if the EA's objections on flood risk grounds have been adequately addressed.

Case Officer: Mark Worringham

## Site layout

