

PLANNING & REGULATION COMMITTEE – 12 APRIL 2010

ERECTION OF A SINGLE STOREY BUILDING TO PROVIDE A NEW CHILDREN'S CENTRE AND PRE-SCHOOL, PLUS ASSOCIATED WORKS TO INCLUDE REARRANGEMENT OF EXISTING CAR PARKING AREA TO CREATE 3 ADDITIONAL CAR PARKING SPACES AND 1 MINI BUS PARKING SPACE, FENCING AND A FOOTPATH (TEMPORARY CONTRACTORS ACCESS TO BE VIA FIR TREE CLOSE)

Location: John Blandy Primary School, Laurel Drive, Southmoor, Abingdon, Oxfordshire. OX13 5DJ.

Application No: R3.0011/10

District Council Area: Vale of White Horse

Introduction

1. This application is for the erection of a single storey building to provide a new children's centre and replacement pre-school accommodation. The proposal also involves the rearrangement of the existing car park to provide 4 additional parking spaces, creation of a new footpath within the school site and fencing.

Location (see site plan)

2. John Blandy Primary School is in Southmoor, approximately 6.5 miles (10.5 kilometres) west of Abingdon and to the south of the A420 Oxford to Swindon Road. The site is located within a residential area on the northern side of the village, just off Laurel Drive.

Site and Setting (see site plan)

3. The school site is immediately bounded by a recreation ground to the east, a playground to the south, and residential properties to the north, south and west. There is a footpath to the south west corner of the site, which runs from Faringdon Road via Fir Tree Close to the school site. A footpath also runs parallel to the school's southern site boundary.
4. The site comprises a single storey school building, located in the western half of the site, and the school playing field, which occupies the eastern half. The existing school car park lies close to the northern site boundary and immediately north of the school building. There are two hard play areas located to the west of the school building and east of the car park. A 1m high wire mesh fence runs along the west and southern site boundaries. Also

along the western boundary adjoining neighbours have erected 2m high close boarded timber fences.

5. The nearest residential dwellings to the proposed new building are located to the south and west of the site, about 25 metres away.

Background and Details of the Development

6. The proposed development seeks to provide a new building for use as a children's centre and replacement pre-school accommodation. Children's centres are service hubs where children under 5 years old and their families can access children's services and information. The provision of these centres is part of the national government strategy to ensure that all families with children have access to affordable, flexible, high quality childcare places. Local Authorities have been tasked with the strategic responsibility of delivering these centres to cater for the needs of local communities.
7. It is proposed that the Southmoor children centre would comprise a reception/office area, a consultation room and a family room. Local families would be encouraged to walk to the new building, and children centre staff would take some services out to villages within the children centre catchment area (Standford in the Vale, Longworth, Buckland, Hinton Waldrist, Charney Basset and Littleworth). It is also proposed that some children centre sessions with high levels of attendance would continue to be held at the local village hall and at other village centres.
8. This application also proposes the relocation of Southmoor pre-school into this new building on the school site. The pre-school currently operates in Southmoor Village Hall (about 400m to the west). There is a need for the pre-school to run 5 days a week, and for longer hours than at present. However, due to lack of funds the pre-school can only currently afford to operate between the hours of 9:15am and 1pm Monday to Thursday. Southmoor Pre-school have now secured funding for a new building which would enable them to operate during the hours of 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday, and offer a breakfast, lunch and after-school and a holiday club. The secured funds (from central government) are a one off, and are offered on the proviso that the pre-school and proposed children's centre are delivered as a joint project on the John Blandy Primary School site. It is anticipated that the delivery of a children's centre and pre-school on the primary school site would allow shared use of facilities and best meet the needs of its users.
9. The new building (with a 390m² footprint) would accommodate both a children's centre (with capacity up to 20 parents and children with 3–4 staff) and a pre school (with capacity for 26 children and 4 staff). The building would be single storey and would be constructed in light coloured brick with a darker brick band around the building at window height. It would have a concrete slate pitched roof. The new building is proposed to have a BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'. To achieve this the application proposes:
 - The use of materials rated with the highest environmental performance.

- Increased wall cavity to increase insulation within the building.
 - Rainwater harvesting for use in the new gardens.
10. A freestanding green polyester powder coated canopy would be erected outside the family room and the main entrance of the building. A side canopy on the northern elevation would allow parking for 12 bicycles.
 11. A new path with 1m high bollard lights is proposed from the main school entrance to the new building (along the north west and western boundary of the site) to allow the school and children's centre/pre-school to operate separately and safely. Low level bollard lights have been chosen to prevent light spilling into neighbouring properties. The lights would be on a timer, and would be switched off outside of working hours.
 12. Two new gardens are proposed immediately east and west of the new building. Bowtop metal fencing (1.2m high) is proposed around the gardens, along the length of the new footpath and the existing path which leads onto Fir Tree Close.
 13. It is proposed to re-arrange the existing car park on the school site to accommodate 3 additional car parking spaces, and 1 minibus space. It is intended also that 8 car parking spaces would be designated at the Village Hall for pre-school/children centre use.

Transport Assessment

14. A Transport Assessment has been submitted with the application. The key points covered by the assessment include: existing transport issues on and around the school site, catchment area for the pre-school, proposed on site parking and accessibility, trip generation figures for the existing pre-school, traffic growth data, personal injury accident data, and a construction management plan. As part of the consultation process Transport Development Control requested further information, including site observations during the morning school peak periods. As a result an amended Transport Assessment has been submitted which confirms that the pre-school would generate 8 vehicular trips to the site between 08.00 – 09.00am, and 8 vehicular arrivals to the children centre (at its busiest hour). The assessment concludes that the transport implications of the proposed development are acceptable.
15. If permission is given, it is proposed to create a new temporary contractors entrance from Fir Tree Close to allow the school to operate with minimal disruption during the construction period. To facilitate the new temporary contractor's access it would be necessary to remove a horse chestnut tree from the south west corner of the school site, and part of an oak hedge along the western site boundary. A replacement horse chestnut tree and oak sapling hedgerow is proposed as part of the development. The construction period is estimated to last for 6 months.

Consultations

16. **Vale of White Horse District Council** – Object on the grounds that the new building would result in the unnecessary removal of a horse chestnut tree that positively contributes to the character of the locality. Suggest that the layout be amended to place the building further to the east in order to retain the tree. Also suggest the imposition of a condition requiring the submission of a traffic management plan (both construction and future occupiers) to safeguard the residential amenity of the neighbours.
17. **Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Parish Council** - Object on the grounds that additional traffic and road-side parking would have an unacceptable impact on neighbouring residents, and road safety. Suggest that the horse chestnut tree be re-located rather than removed.
18. **Thames Water** – No objection. Recommend that the applicant should ensure that storm water flows are attenuated or regulated into the receiving public network through on or off site storage. When it is proposed to connect to a combined public sewer, the site drainage should be separate and combined at the final manhole nearest the boundary.
19. **Transport DC** – The proposed development would not have a significant impact on the transport network. A combined travel plan should be submitted for the primary school site (to include the primary school, pre-school and children’s centre), and the School Travel Plan should be updated in the interim. A construction management plan should also be submitted for approval.
20. **County Forester** – No objection. Although the horse chestnut tree is in good condition, other horse chestnut trees in the area are currently dying of bleeding canker and there is not certainty that this tree will survive. Existing trees which are to be retained need to be protected from contractor’s movements during construction.
21. **County Archaeologist** – Application does not appear to directly affect any known archaeological sites. Request an informative advising of appropriate action to be taken in the event of archaeological finds.
22. **County Ecologist** – No objection. Recommends: i) that hedgerow felling or coppicing should not take place during the bird breeding season, ii) the replacement hedge and any existing gaps be planted with locally characteristic species, and iii) details of the location and design of bat bricks should be submitted for approval.
23. **Third Party Representations** (copies are available in the members resource centre)
24. 74 responses from individual residents have been received relating to this application (50 in support, 2 responses of concern, and 22 objections) regarding this application. The key points in the representations are:

Points made in support of the application:

- the pre-school would close this year if the application were to be refused,
- closer links would be formed between the pre-school and John Blandy Primary School.
- the children's centre would be beneficial to the local community

Points made against the application:

- introduction of a commercial development within a residential area
- planning history – a previous application for a pre-school on Fir Tree close was not supported by the District Council
- lack of demand for a children's in Southmoor as it is an affluent village
- impact of additional parking, traffic and construction traffic on local residents, highway safety, transport network and access for emergency services during school peaks, before and after school hours, school holidays and at the start and end of each children centre session
- incomplete and inconsistent traffic assessment
- lack of clarity over planned use and opening times of the children's centre and pre-school
- loss of sunlight
- impact of noise and light pollution (from light bollards) on local residents
- proposed path would result in overlooking into adjacent gardens, and would encourage young people to congregate on the school site during the evenings
- impact on local wildlife as a result of the removal of a mature hedge
- inadequate drainage system

Relevant Development Plan and other Policies

25. Planning applications should be decided in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
26. The relevant development plan documents are The South East Plan Regional Spatial Strategy 2026 (RSS), and the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 (VOWHLP). The relevant policies are as follows:
 - RSS – BE5, CC4, CC6, NRM2, NRM5, NRM10, T1, T2, T4, T5, T7, S3 S5, and S6.
 - VOWHLP- CF1, CF2, DC1, DC2, DC3, DC5, DC6, DC9, DC10, DC14, DC20, GS5, GS10,TR4 and TR9.

These policies are set out in Annex 1 to the report.

Comments of the Head of Sustainable Development

27. The main issues that need to be considered in deciding the merits of this proposal fall into the following headings:
- (i) The principle of a family centre and pre-school use on this site;
 - (ii) Impact on local residents including traffic and transport implications
 - (iii) Other environmental impacts
- (i) The principle of family centre and pre-school uses on this site
28. The application proposes a single new building for community use within the John Blandy school grounds. RSS policy S3 and Local Plan policy CF2 support the principle of providing community facilities within existing settlements, and support the combining of related facilities (such as pre-school and school) onto the same sites. In addition RSS Policy BE5 seeks to enhance key local services within rural areas.
29. However, some respondents have argued that further 'commercial' development is inappropriate and that a previous application for a pre-school was not supported by the district council. Others have said that there is no need for this facility.
30. Combining additional school related uses on the site is in principle consistent with development plan policy so long as this does not result in undue loss of amenity to local residents (amenity is covered later in the report). In my view the new building proposed is modest in scale, being single storey and is generally appropriate to the school site.
31. The letters of support for the proposal have all expressed concern about the possible closure of Southmoor pre-school. These residents also welcome a children's centre within the village of Southmoor. The pre-school has confirmed that they would be unable to operate for much longer if they were unable to relocate to the primary school site. I consider that there is a clear need for a pre-school with extended hours of operation, and that the application accords with policy BE5 of the RSS as, the proposal seeks to protect and enhance a key local community facility. The provision of a children's centre in Southmoor is in line with central government's objective to ensure that all parents and families have access to children services and information regardless of their socio-economic grouping and the Southmoor centre should serve very well the communities located along either side of this stretch of the A420 (the likes of Longworth, Hinton Waldrist, Charney Bassett, Stanford in the Vale, Buckland and Littleworth). In my view the children's centre accords with Policy CF2 of the VOWHLP as the centre would promote the social well being of the community, and for the reasons outlined below, should not significantly harm the environment of the local area.

(ii) Impact on local residents including traffic and transport implications

Traffic and transport

32. The application proposes a new building that could accommodate up to 46 visitors and 7-8 staff at any one time. I understand that at present the school has 175 children attending (maximum capacity is 180). Three on site parking spaces would be provided for the additional staff together with general cycle parking.
33. VOWHLP policy TR9 requires a transport assessment for proposals that have significant transport implications and requires that transport impacts be adequately mitigated and that travel plans be required. A transport assessment has been submitted with this application.
34. Local people are clearly very concerned about the impact of the extra children coming to this site particularly in terms of on street parking, consequent safety and inconvenience issues. The question of access at peak parking times for emergency vehicles has also been raised.
35. There are in effect three routes to the school: the main entrance in Laurel Drive, the side entrance in Fir Tree Close, and a footpath from the main Faringdon Road. Arrivals and departures particularly at start and end of the school day give rise to parents parking at all three of these access points. Local people around the Fir Tree Close cul de sac in particular and in Laurel Drive experience congestion through parking and dropping off. They say that this can mean driveways are sometimes blocked and when cars are parked on Laurel Drive, drivers then have to pass those cars on the wrong side of the road on a bend.
36. Parking in residential areas at peak school activity times is a common issue at many schools across the county. Transport Development Control have carefully considered this particular proposal and they raise no objection provided the travel plan for the site is refreshed to take account of this new development and a construction management plan is agreed.
37. In my view the impact of this development needs to be considered in the context of the existing activity at the school and the potential alternative ways in which up to 46 visitors coming to the new facilities can arrive at the site. There are in effect three access points to the school which can reduce the concentration of new vehicle activity at any one access; a percentage of the children may arrive on foot, some may visit as part of a linked trip as siblings may attend the main school, some may park at the spaces to be provided at the village hall (though given this is 400 metres away I doubt this will persuade many car borne visitors away from local parking). The operating times of the uses are to some extent staggered in so much that pre school children will arrive significantly earlier than the main time of arrival at the school.

38. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue service have confirmed that the new building should not pose accessibility or water pumping problems.
39. The amended transport assessment that has been submitted suggests that the proposed development would have minimal impact on the existing transport network as the staggered service times (for both the pre-school and children's centre) would not coincide with school peak periods. In my view the additional activity at the school would give rise only to modest additional parking around the site and providing a travel plan is secured and implemented the traffic impacts of the proposal are acceptable. Because there is strong local feeling about parking issues around the site already, I suggest that it would be beneficial for the school to hold a liaison meeting with local people to encourage good relations in respect of parking and travel to school practices.
40. The pre school group wish to run a holiday club. To relieve parking issues during school holidays, a condition could be imposed to require pre school users to use the school car park.

Other potential impacts

41. There has been some confusion about operating hours of the new building. The operating hours proposed for the pre school are from 8.00am until 5.00pm Mondays to Fridays including through the school holidays. The opening times for the children centre are likely to be less.
42. Local plan policy DC9 seeks to prevent development that would unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties. In addition to the main building, a small children's garden (for the pre-school) is proposed in the south west corner of the site; nevertheless, given a) the distance of the building and the garden from the nearest houses, b) that the building is next to a school and next to a playground, c) that the site would not operate in the evenings, and d) that there is generally good 2 metre high fencing around most of the gardens to the west of the site, I believe that there would be no significant harm by way of additional noise for local people.
43. Two local residents (who reside at the same dwelling) have objected on the grounds that they consider the new building may reduce the amount of sunlight which they would receive. The building would be 26m from their dwelling. In addition I have applied the 45⁰¹ sunlight rule to this development and this shows that the new building would in fact be built on a 90⁰ (approx) angle to the objectors dwelling. In my view therefore the proposed single storey building should not have a significant light impact on the adjacent 2 storey residential property.

¹ 45⁰ sunlight rule – a new building could only have an impact on sunlight if it is built within 45⁰ of an existing building.

Footpath and lighted bollards

44. A footpath is proposed along the western boundary of the school site adjacent the rear gardens of properties facing Laurel drive. This is in order to enable a connection between the main school entrance and the new building, It would only be open during site operating hours.
45. Some residents have expressed concern about the effect of 1 metre high bollard lights proposed along the path.
46. These lights would be located on the school side of back garden boundary fences, they would be 1 metre high, and controlled by a timer to avoid their use out of operational hours.
47. One resident has also stated that the footpath would overlook their garden because their fence is only 4 feet high with a trellis.
48. I think it is unlikely that the limited use of the low level lights should cause a problem. A 2 metre fence could be provided for the resident with the lower fence.
49. Some residents have expressed concern that a formal lit path would further encourage young people to climb over the rear school gate (located just off Fir Tree Close) and congregate on the school site, just to the rear of their back garden fence, in the evenings. Security of school premises is a common problem on school sites in the county and the problem is often difficult to address without making our schools resemble high security institutions. In this instance a condition could be imposed requiring a higher replacement gate to try and address this issue.

(iii) Environmental Impacts

Trees and hedgerow

50. The application proposes to remove a horse chestnut tree and hedgerow to facilitate the contractors access, and to plant a replacement horse chestnut tree and hedgerow. Policy DC6 of the Local Plan requires new development to protect and enhance the visual amenities and maximise wildlife habitat creation.
51. Two local residents have expressed concern about the impact that the loss of the horse chestnut tree would have on climate change and nesting birds. The Vale of White Horse District Council has also objected as in their view the tree contributes to the character of the wider locality.
52. The County Forester has been consulted on this proposal. He advises that the horse chestnut tree is currently very small. If the tree were to be retained it would grow to dominate the adjacent gardens and would eventually cast very dense shade beneath the canopy. That shade may become a nuisance to neighbours (particularly in the mornings) and would interfere with the

occupiers' enjoyment of the gardens and premises. He has also commented that there is no certainty that the existing tree would survive as young horse chestnut trees in the area are currently dying of a disease known as bleeding canker. The County Ecologist has also commented that the existing tree is not a potential bird nesting site or bat roost.

53. This tree could possibly be retained by relocating the proposed building within the site but this would impact on the proposed outdoor play space linked to the building. However, it is proposed to secure the contractor's access from Fir Tree Close which would in any case involve the removal of the tree. To secure the long term visual amenity of the site and surrounding area, in my view the tree should be removed, and replacement planting should be provided. A condition could be applied requiring this to be done.
54. To maximise wildlife habitat creation as recommended by the County Ecologist a condition could be imposed requiring the implementation of a replacement hedge and the use of bat bricks in the development. I am therefore of the view that the application accords with policy DC6 of the VOWHLP subject to the attachment of appropriate conditions.

Drainage

55. Policy DC14 of the Local Plan requires that development generating surface water run-off be effectively controlled and adequately mitigated.
56. Some local residents have expressed concerns about the impact that the new development would have on the existing drainage system, particularly in Fir Tree Close.
57. Thames Water have been consulted on this application and they have not raised any objections to the proposal. They have, however, recommended that surface water drainage (including storm flows) are attenuated or regulated before going into the off site public drainage system. This issue can be addressed by the imposition of an appropriate condition and to that end the proposal would accord with Policy DC14.

Conclusion

58. I consider that this proposal would enable Southmoor pre-school (an important local county facility) to continue operating whilst also providing another key community facility in the form of a children centre within the village. Concerns have been raised about the need for the development, and the impact that it may have on neighbouring residents, particularly the traffic and parking implications, and landscaping and drainage. I am of the view, however, that there is a need for this development and the new building would be at a scale and design that relates well to the existing school buildings and surrounding development, and would have a minimal impact on the visual amenities of neighbouring properties. The landscaping improvements proposed in my view outweigh the loss of one small horse chestnut tree. In addition, it is my opinion that the proposal would only give rise to modest

additional parking around the site and a travel plan for the site should promote more sustainable travel. In addition, the provision of additional on site parking and the imposition of conditions to control the hours that the building can operate and the use of the existing school car park for parking purposes during holiday periods should further help to mitigate traffic concerns. In the light of the above I recommend approval for the development subject to conditions outlined below.

RECOMMENDATION

59. It is **RECOMMENDED** that Application R3.0011/10 be approved subject to conditions to be determined by the Head of Sustainable Development to include the following matters:

1. The development must be carried out strictly in accordance with the particulars contained in the application and the plans.
2. Commencement of the development within 3 years.
3. Submission and agreement of external materials.
4. Submission of boundary fence details.
5. Submission of rear pedestrian fence design,
6. Submission of drainage details.
7. Submission of tree root protection zone details.
8. Submission of landscaping scheme (to include replacement tree and hedge planting).
9. Implement landscaping.
10. Hedgerow felling and coppicing should not take place during the bird breeding season
11. Submission and agreement of bat brick design and location
12. Update of the existing school travel plan
13. Submission and agreement of a combined travel plan (to include reference to the school, children centre and pre-school)
14. Submission and approval of the final car parking details
15. Submission and approval of cycle and buggy parking details.
16. School parking facilities to be used by the pre-school during the school holidays.
17. Submission and agreement of a Construction Management Plan.

Archaeological informative – County Archaeologist to be informed if any archaeological finds are uncovered.

Ecological informative – to deal with any issues arising if any protected species are found on site.

Drainage informative – Investigations to be carried out (in consultation with OCC Southern Area Office) into the existing drainage system in Fir Tree Close.

Water meeting informative – school to set up liaison meeting with local residents to discuss issues of mutual concern and benefit.

CHRIS COUSINS
Head of Sustainable Development
Environment & Economy

Background papers: File Ref: R3.0011/10 8.4/4089/7

March 2010

Relevant Development Plan and other Policies

The South East Plan Regional Spatial Strategy 2026 (RSS)

POLICY BE5: VILLAGE MANAGEMENT

In preparing local development documents (LDDs), local planning authorities should positively plan to meet the defined local needs of their rural communities for small scale affordable housing, business and service development, taking account of changing patterns of agriculture, economic diversification, and continued viability of local services. LDDs should define their approach to development in villages based on the functions performed, their accessibility, the need to protect or extend key local services and the capacity of the built form and landscape setting of the village. All new development should be subject to rigorous design and sustainability criteria so that the distinctive character of the village is not damaged.

To assist this, local planning authorities should encourage community-led local assessments of need and action planning to inform decision making processes.

POLICY CC4: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

The design and construction of all new development, and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock will be expected to adopt and incorporate sustainable construction standards and techniques. This will include:

- i. consideration of how all aspects of development form can contribute to securing high standards of sustainable development including aspects such as energy, water efficiency and biodiversity gain
- ii. designing to increase the use of natural lighting, heat and ventilation, and for a proportion of the energy supply of new development to be secured from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources
- iii. securing reduction and increased recycling of construction and demolition waste and procurement of low-impact materials
- iv. designing for flexible use and adaptation to reflect changing lifestyles and needs and the principle of 'whole life costing'.

Local planning authorities will promote best practice in sustainable construction and help to achieve the national timetable for reducing carbon emissions from residential and non-residential buildings. There will be situations where it could be appropriate for local planning authorities to anticipate levels of building sustainability in advance of those set out nationally, for identified development area or site-specific opportunities. When proposing any local requirements for sustainable buildings, local planning authorities must be able to demonstrate clearly the local circumstances that warrant and allow this and set them out in development plan documents.

POLICY CC6: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND CHARACTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Actions and decisions associated with the development and use of land will actively promote the creation of sustainable and distinctive communities. This will be achieved by developing and implementing a local shared vision which:

- i. respects, and where appropriate enhances, the character and distinctiveness of settlements and landscapes throughout the region
- ii. uses innovative design processes to create a high quality built environment which promotes a sense of place. This will include consideration of accessibility, social inclusion, the need for environmentally sensitive development and crime reduction.

POLICY NRM2: WATER QUALITY

Water quality will be maintained and enhanced through avoiding adverse effects of development on the water environment.

In preparing local development documents, and determining planning applications, local authorities will:

- i. take account of water cycle studies, groundwater vulnerability maps, groundwater source protection zone maps and asset management plans as prepared by the Environment Agency, water and sewerage companies, and local authorities;
- ii. ensure that the environmental water quality standards and objectives as required by European Directives are met
- iii. ensure that the rate and location of development does not breach either relevant 'no deterioration' objectives or environmental quality standards
- iv. not permit development that presents a risk of pollution or where satisfactory pollution prevention measures are not provided in areas of high groundwater vulnerability (in consultation with the Environment Agency and Natural England).

Local authorities will work with water and sewerage companies and the Environment Agency to:

- i. identify infrastructure needs, allocate areas and safeguard these for infrastructure development
- ii. ensure that adequate wastewater and sewerage capacity is provided to meet planned demand
- iii. ensure that impacts of treated sewage discharges on groundwater, inland and marine receiving waters do not breach environmental quality standards or 'no deterioration' objectives
- iv. ensure that plans and policies are consistent with River Basin Management Plans
- v. ensure that water cycle studies are carried out, prior to development sites being given planning permission, where investigations by the Environment Agency indicate that water quality constraints exist

- vi. ensure that Sustainable Drainage Systems are incorporated in a manner to reduce diffuse pollution.

Local authorities should promote land management initiatives to reduce diffuse agricultural pollution.

POLICY NRM5: CONSERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY

Local planning authorities and other bodies shall avoid a net loss of biodiversity, and actively pursue opportunities to achieve a net gain across the region.

- i. They must give the highest level of protection to sites of international nature conservation importance (European sites). Plans or projects implementing policies in this RSS are subject to the Habitats Directive. Where a likely significant effect of a plan or project on European sites cannot be excluded, an appropriate assessment in line with the Habitats Directive and associated regulations will be required.
- ii. If after completing an appropriate assessment of a plan or project local planning authorities and other bodies are unable to conclude that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of any European sites, the plan or project will not be approved, irrespective of conformity with other policies in the RSS, unless otherwise in compliance with 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.
- iii. For example when deciding on the distribution of housing allocations, local planning authorities should consider a range of alternative distributions within their area and should distribute an allocation in such a way that it avoids adversely affecting the integrity of European sites. In the event that a local planning authority concludes that it cannot distribute an allocation accordingly, or otherwise avoid or adequately mitigate any adverse effect, it should make provision up to the level closest to its original allocation for which it can be concluded that it can be distributed without adversely affecting the integrity of any European sites.
- iv. They shall avoid damage to nationally important sites of special scientific interest and seek to ensure that damage to county wildlife sites and locally important wildlife and geological sites is avoided, including additional areas outside the boundaries of European sites where these support the species for which that site has been selected.
- v. They shall ensure appropriate access to areas of wildlife importance, identifying areas of opportunity for biodiversity improvement and setting targets reflecting those in the table headed 'Regional Biodiversity Targets – Summary for 2010 and 2026' below. Opportunities for biodiversity improvement, including connection of sites, large-scale habitat restoration, enhancement and re-creation in the areas of strategic opportunity for biodiversity improvement (Diagram NRM3) should be pursued.
- vi. They shall influence and applying agri-environment schemes, forestry, flood defence, restoration of mineral extraction sites and other land management practices to:
 - deliver biodiversity targets
 - increase the wildlife value of land
 - reduce diffuse pollution
 - protect soil resources.

- vii. They shall promote policies that integrate the need to accommodate the changes taking place in agriculture with the potential implications of resultant development in the countryside.
- viii. They shall require green infrastructure to be identified, developed and implemented in conjunction with new development.

POLICY NRM10: NOISE

Measures to address and reduce noise pollution will be developed at regional and local level through means such as:

- i. locating new residential and other sensitive development away from existing sources of significant noise or away from planned new sources of noise
- ii. traffic management and requiring sound attenuation measures in major transport schemes
- iii. encouraging high levels of sound-proofing and screening as part of sustainable housing design and construction.

POLICY T1: MANAGE AND INVEST

Relevant regional strategies, local development documents and local transport plans should ensure that their management policies and proposals:

- i. are consistent with, and supported by, appropriate mobility management measures
- ii. achieve a re-balancing of the transport system in favour of sustainable modes as a means of access to services and facilities
- iii. foster and promote an improved and integrated network of public transport services in and between both urban and rural areas
- iv. encourage development that is located and designed to reduce average journey lengths
- v. improve the maintenance of the existing transport system
- vi. include measures that reduce the overall number of road casualties]
- vii. include measures to minimise negative environmental impacts of transport and, where possible, to enhance the environment and communities through such interventions
- viii. investment in upgrading the transport system should be prioritised to support delivery of the spatial strategy by:
 - a. supporting the function of the region's international gateways and inter-regional movement corridors (see Diagram T1 at the end of this chapter)
 - b. developing the network of regional hubs and spokes (see Diagram T2 at the end of the chapter)
 - c. facilitating urban renewal and urban renaissance as a means of achieving a more sustainable pattern of development
 - d. improving overall levels of accessibility.

POLICY T2: MOBILITY MANAGEMENT

The policies and proposals set out in local development documents and local transport plans should include policies to achieve a rebalancing of the transport system in favour of sustainable modes based on an integrated package of measures drawn from the following:

- i. the allocation and management of highway space used by individual modes of travel
- ii. the scale of provision and management (including pricing) of car parking both off and on-street
- iii. the scope and management of public transport services
- iv. an integrated and comprehensive travel planning advice service
- v. improvements in the extent and quality of pedestrian and cycle routes
- vi. charging initiatives
- vii. intelligent transport systems including the use of systems to convey information to transport users
- viii. incentives for car sharing and the encouragement of car clubs
- ix. local services and e-services to reduce the need to travel
- x. changes in ways of working that alter the extent and balance of future demand for movement
- xi. demand responsive transport and other innovative solutions that increase accessibility
- xii. measures that increase accessibility to rail stations.

Plans will need to reflect the fact that low delivery from any one of these elements will require a compensatory increase in delivery from one or more of the others.

POLICY T5: TRAVEL PLANS AND ADVICE

Local authorities must ensure that their local development documents and local transport plans identify those categories of major travel generating developments, both existing and proposed, for which travel plans should be developed.

Local transport authorities should also consider piloting the concept of transport planning advice centres for regional hubs in their local transport plans.

POLICY T7: RURAL TRANSPORT

Local transport plans covering areas that are not wholly urban should:

- i. take a co-ordinated approach to encouraging community-based transport in areas of need
- ii. include a rural dimension to transport and traffic management policies, including looking for opportunities to improve provision for cyclists and pedestrians between towns and their nearest villages
- iii. develop innovative and adaptable approaches to public transport in rural areas that reflect the particular and longer-term social and economic characteristics of the region.

POLICY S3: EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Local planning authorities, taking into account demographic projections, should work with partners to ensure the adequate provision of pre-school, school and community learning facilities. Policies should advocate the widening and deepening of participation through better accessibility, reflecting the role the planning system can play in developing and shaping healthy sustainable communities. Policies should:

- i. take account of the future development needs of the economy and the community sector
- ii. encourage mixed use approaches, that include community facilities alongside 'formal' education facilities
- iii. seek to ensure access for all sections of society to education facilities at locations with good public transport access.

POLICY S5: CULTURAL AND SPORTING ACTIVITY

Increased and sustainable participation in sport, recreation and cultural activity should be encouraged by local authorities, public agencies and their partners through local development documents and other measures in order to improve the overall standard of fitness, enhance cultural diversity and enrich the overall quality of life.

Provision for cultural and sporting activity should:

- i. be based on an up to date strategy for the selected provision which should cover aspects such as the arts, heritage, the museums, libraries and archive sectors and sporting activity
- ii. be based on an audit of current supply and an assessment of this supply against estimated demand/growth. The audits should cover the quantitative, qualitative and accessible nature of provision. Authorities should encourage formal partnership working to put in place effective programmes of provision and management.

Local development documents should include policies relevant to local needs designed to:

- i. encourage participation by disadvantaged and socially excluded persons/groups
- ii. locate facilities sustainably where they can be accessed by a range of modes of transport particularly healthy forms of transport i.e. walking and cycling
- iii. make joint service provisions where appropriate
- iv. give special attention to cultural provision in supporting economic growth and urban regeneration, which may be the subject of area action plans

include policies encouraging workplace and other everyday provision for increased physical activity.

POLICY S6: COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The regional planning authority and regional partners, including SEEDA, will work with Government and other agencies to increase investment in physical and social infrastructure and secure co-ordination between development and essential infrastructure provision.

Where appropriate, the mixed use of community facilities should be encouraged by local authorities, public agencies and other providers, through local development documents and other measures in order to make effective use of resources and reduce travel and other impacts.

Local planning authorities, in consultation with those delivering services using community infrastructure (including the Third Sector and Faith organisations), will ensure facilities are located and designed appropriately, taking account of local needs and a whole life costing approach.

Policies should also ensure that:

- i. community infrastructure supports economic growth and regeneration, with particular priority for health and education provision
- ii. creative thinking and action on new mixes of cultural and community facilities is encouraged
- iii. appropriate facilities are made accessible to all sections of the community, in both urban and rural settlements.

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011

POLICY CF1

Proposals involving the loss of land or buildings in community use which, in terms of their location, physical characteristics and accessibility, are considered suitable to meet identified community needs will not be permitted, unless:

- i) adequate, appropriate, alternative provision sufficient to accommodate the loss is included as part of the proposal, or
- ii) sufficient convenient provision is already available elsewhere.

POLICY CF2

Development which is proposed in connection with the provision of new services and facilities for the social well-being of local communities, including extensions to and changes in the use of existing buildings, will be permitted where the following criteria are met:

- i) the proposal conforms with the general policies for development in the plan and in particular maximises as far as is possible access for all;

- ii) any proposal for a new building is within the built-up area of a settlement or within or adjacent to a group of existing buildings providing for such uses and is not within the green belt outside a village area defined in policy GS3 or outside a major developed site defined in policy GS4;
- iii) any extension will not have an adverse effect on the character or setting of the existing building or its surroundings, or significantly alter the character and scale of the existing activity so as to cause harm to the local environment; and

Exceptionally, development of a small scale community facility adjacent to the built-up area of a settlement will be permitted:

- a) where it meets a clearly identified local need that cannot be met in any other way; and
- b) it is not within the green belt outside a village area defined in policy GS3.

POLICY DC1

Development will be permitted provided that:

- i) it is of high quality and inclusive design such that the layout, scale, mass, height, detailing, materials used and its relationship to adjoining buildings and open space do not adversely affect those attributes that make a positive contribution to the character of the locality;
- ii) it takes into account local distinctiveness and character either in a modern or a traditional interpretation.

POLICY DC2

In new developments consideration should be given to measures to conserve energy and the use of other resources. These may include passive solar design (which involves influencing the layout, design, orientation and shelter of buildings), the use of energy-efficient technologies, measures to conserve the use of water and maximising the re-use of recycled and waste materials.

POLICY DC3

The design and layout of new buildings and the spaces around and between them as well as access provisions must be arranged to increase security and deter crimes. Proposals to increase security on existing development will be permitted provided there is no harm to the character of the area.

POLICY DC5

Proposals for development will only be permitted that:

- i) safe and convenient access will be provided both within the site and to and from the adjoining highway network for all users including those with impaired mobility, and for all modes of transport;
- ii) the road network can accommodate the traffic arising from the development without causing safety, congestion or environmental problems;
- iii) adequate provision will be made for loading, unloading, circulation, servicing and vehicle turning;
- iv) adequate and safe provision will be made for parking vehicles and cycles;
- v) off-site improvements to the highway infrastructure (including traffic management measures), cycleways, footpaths and the public transport network can be secured where these are not adequate to service the development; and
- vi) the scheme is designed to minimise the impact of vehicles and give priority to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, the users of public transport and those with impaired mobility.

POLICY DC6

All proposals for development will be required to include hard and soft landscaping measures designed to:

- i) protect and enhance the visual amenities of the site and its surroundings including, where appropriate, existing important landscape features; and
- ii) maximise the opportunities for nature conservation and wildlife habitat creation.

POLICY DC9

Development will not be permitted if it would unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties and the wider environment in terms of:

- i) loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight;
- ii) dominance or visual intrusion;
- iii) noise or vibration;
- iv) smell, dust, heat, gases or other emissions;
- v) pollution, contamination or the use of or storage of hazardous substances; and
- vi) external lighting.

POLICY DC10

Development will not be permitted if it is likely to be adversely affected by existing or potential sources of:

- i) noise or vibration;
- ii) smell, dust, heat, gases or other emissions; or
- iii) pollution, contamination of the site or its surroundings and hazardous substances nearby.

POLICY DC14

Development generating surface water run-off likely to result in adverse effects, such as an increased risk of flooding, changes in ground water levels, and river channel instability or damage to habitats, will not be permitted unless:

- i) the development's surface water management system accords with sustainable drainage principles and has been designed as an integral part of the development layout; and
- ii) the system will effectively control and adequately mitigate or attenuate any adverse effects from surface water run-off on people, habitats of acknowledged importance and property.

Where development is permitted under this policy, the associated appropriate attenuation measures must be in place before the development commences.

POLICY DC20

Applications for planning permission, or for consent for the display of advertisements, which involve external lighting will be permitted provided that:

- i) there shall be no adverse effect on the character of the area or the amenity of neighbouring properties;
- ii) the lighting proposed is the minimum necessary to undertake the task for which it is required;
- iii) the potential light pollution from glare and spillage is minimized; and
- iv) there will not be a hazard to highway safety.

Where permission or consent is granted for external lighting conditions may be imposed requiring a light spillage test prior to its first use and, where necessary, the fitting of devices to reduce glare and light spillage and/or to restrict the hours during which the lighting may be used.

POLICY GS5

Within existing settlements development will only be permitted if it makes efficient use of land and buildings and provided it would not result in:

- i) the loss of an important local facility;
- ii) harm to the site or its surroundings; or
- iii) a poor quality environment for those who live in, work in, or visit the Vale.

POLICY GS10

New development will only be permitted in locations where the need to travel, particularly by car, can be minimized or where it is specifically provided for in other policies in this plan. Development which would generate significant levels of traffic will not be permitted where travel by modes other than the private car are not available or cannot be provided for effectively.

POLICY TR4

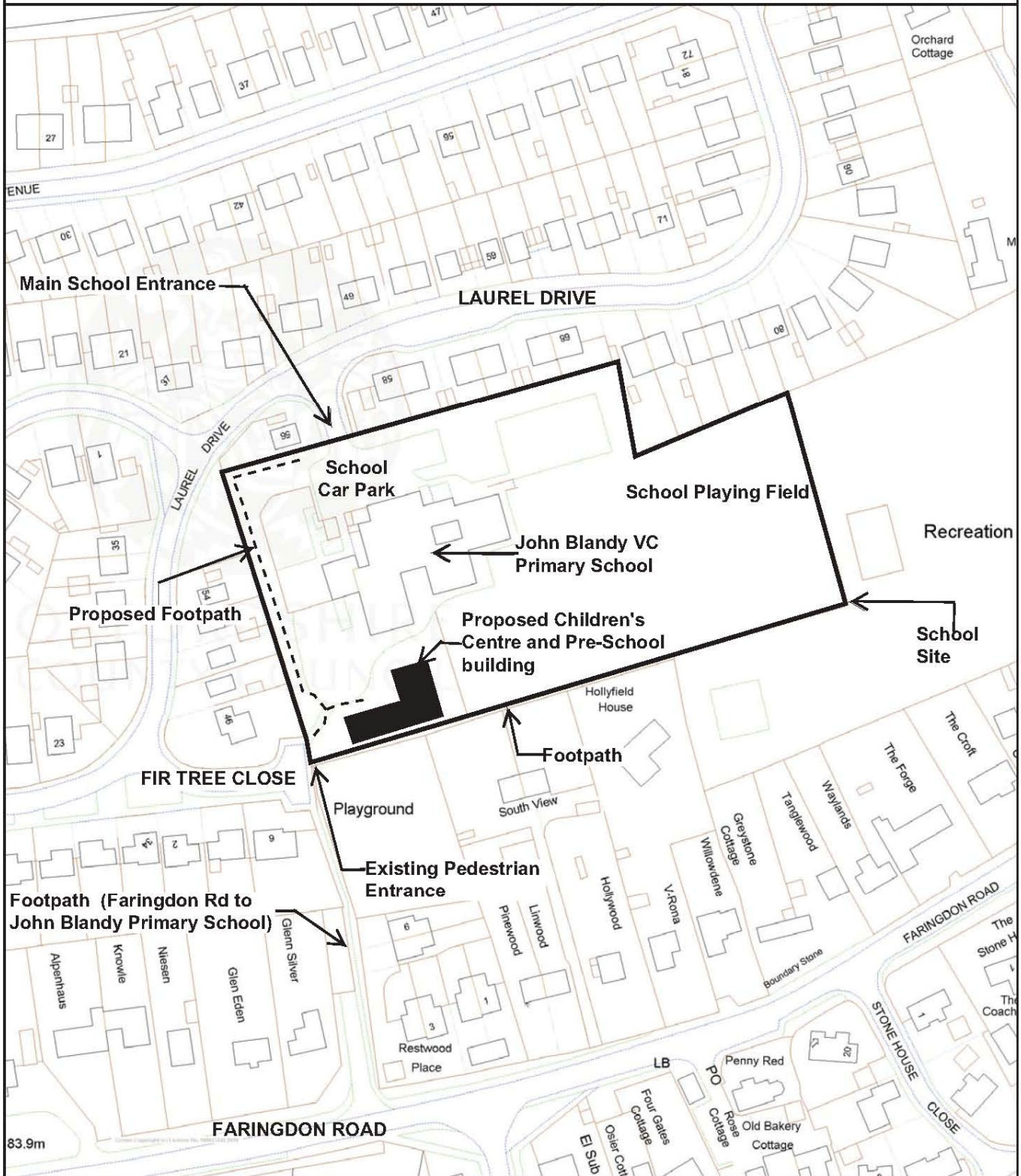
The needs of pedestrians and cyclists will be taken into account in determining proposals for development and in the design and implementation of highway and traffic management schemes by seeking the provision of safe and convenient facilities and secure and covered cycle parking.

POLICY TR9

Development proposals which have significant transport implications will only be permitted where they are accompanied by a Transport Assessment identifying the transport impacts of the proposal, and where those impacts are adequately mitigated. A Travel Plan will be required where development proposals are likely to generate significant levels of traffic.

John Blandy Primary School

Application No. R3.0011/10



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