

Transport comments PL/24/1349 - 30/10/24

The proposed application requests for the Green Park Village temporary car park which was permitted for the use of construction to be retained for a further 5 years and utilised as additional car parking for office space at 400 and 450 Longwater Avenue. The site in question was initially permitted as a 14,080m² office that included a car parking provision of 1 space per 32 (440 spaces) the permission for the site was revised and additional floorspace permitted in 2017 with the parking provision based on the Councils current parking SPD which permits a maximum of at 1 per 50m² (262 spaces). Overall, the scheme was permitted with a parking provision of 702 parking spaces across both sites and is the maximum to which the Highway Authority would permit.

The increase in car parking on a temporary basis has been proposed to aid Three and Wood Group to transition to a reduce parking provision. Providing additional car parking for staff does not aid a transition away from the private car it only encourages its use and as such is counterproductive. The application site is located directly adjacent to a bus service that links the application site to the town centre area in the form of Route 50 as well as being within close proximity to Route 9 that whilst also connecting the site with the Town centre also connects the site with south and east Reading. The site is also within 700m approx. of Green Park Station that would provide links to Reading and Basingstoke

However, Three have been relocated now since 2022 and it would appear from the surveys undertaken that they currently facilitate a parking demand in the region of 554 and 489 which is in excess of 361 spaces provided at 450 Longwater Avenue. This is clear evidence that the provision of additional car parking will not aid a transition as those staff would have already commenced a transition to other modes by now but the applicant is requesting this parking to maintain the status quo. Three were previously located in Reading Town Centre and within close proximity to Reading Railway Station and bus services that would allow those staff to travel that final leg of the journey to the new location by alternative modes of travel.

It has been accepted that the Wood Groups current location at Shinfield Park is less sustainable than the application site and therefore the provision of the bus and train services will allow them to transfer their method of travel from day one and does not require a five year period as is applied for to achieve this goal.

The wider site is fully controlled and managed to ensure that overspill parking does not and cannot occur and as such this would not have a detrimental impact on the wider road network.

The Transport Statement includes a section on the Green Park Travel Plan which was approved in March 2024 with the proposed increase in car parking conflicting with this Travel Plan. The Highway Authority would also stress that the applicant should be implemented the measures included within the document to facilitate the transition from the private car but these do not appear to have been utilised to facilitate a change in travel habits.

However as explained above the proposed development seeks parking in excess of the Highway Authorities standards in a sustainable location within the Borough and as such would be wholly unsustainable the Highway Authority therefore objects to the proposal.

The enlarged parking area for 400 and 450 Longwater Avenue would encourage the increased use of private cars thus promoting unsustainable travel habits and intensifying

long term private motorised traffic burden on the transport system in direct conflict with Local Plan Policies TR1 and TR5.