

HEWEB – Hedge End, West End and Botley Local Area Committee Monday 10 December 2018.

Application Number: F/18/84121
Case Officer: Clare Martin
Received Date: Wednesday 26 September 2018

Site Address: Land Adjacent to Russell's Equestrian Centre (including Lot C, Itchen Valley Country Park), West End, Southampton

Applicant: Verity Tidmarsh

Proposal: Erection of 1.no courtyard building and 1.no isolation block accommodating 20 stables; 1.no double unit mobile home for on-site manager's accommodation, 1.no outdoor arena with lighting and hard standing providing 7no. on site vehicular parking spaces and utilising existing access from Allington Lane.

Recommendation: **PERMIT** subject to:
i) No material objection being raised by the Ecology Officer or Hampshire County Council on plans for the visibility spays.
ii) Drainage survey to be updated to include details of water quality.
iii) No objection being raised by Natural England to the Habitat Regulation Assessment

CONDITIONS AND REASONS

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be implemented in accordance with the following plans numbered: 4132-P-1revD, 4132-P-2revC, 4132-P-3revB, 4132-P-4revB & 4132_P_5.
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall accord with:
 - Ecological Impact Assessment by ECOSA (dated Nov 2018)
 - Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan by ECOSA (dated Nov 18)
 - Lighting Assessment and Strategy by Designs for Lighting (dated Nov 18)
 - Surface Water Drainage Technical Note by M3 Mayer Brown (dated Nov 18)Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
- 3 The development hereby permitted shall start no later than three years from the date of this decision.
Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 4 No excavation, demolition or development related works shall take place on site until an arboricultural method statement and tree protection plan, as per British Standard 5837:2012 (Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction

– Recommendations), are submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The documents must detail final tree and vegetation removals, construction methods in the car parking area and tree protection fencing position and type. The approved documents must be adhered to in full, and may only be modified subject to written agreement from the LPA.

Reason: to retain and protect the existing trees which form an important part of the amenity of the locality.

- 5 No excavation, demolition or development related works shall commence until evidence has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority that the tree protection measures have been installed, as per the approved tree protection plan. Once approved, no access by vehicles or placement of goods, chemicals, fuels, soil or other materials shall take place within the fenced area. Tree protection measures shall be retained in their approved form for the duration of the work. This condition may only be fully discharged upon completion of the proposed development.

Reason: to retain and protect the existing trees which form an important part of the amenity of the locality.

- 6 No excavation, demolition or development related works shall start until a construction environmental management plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This should include, but not be limited to, details including plans of temporary lighting (no light spill into surrounding habitats), noise control, dust suppression, wheel washing facilities, welfare huts, water quality preservation (controlled water and fuel run-off), temporary protective fencing (to demarcate retained habitats without causing entrapment of wildlife), timing of works (specifically in relation to breeding bird season), storage of materials/chemicals/equipment and waste disposal. The development shall then accord with the approved details

Reason: To protect the amenity of the area and the biodiversity of the site and surrounding habitats during construction.

- 7 No development shall start until details of a sustainable drainage system and its management and maintenance details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The system shall be implemented and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory drainage for the development.

- 8 Notwithstanding the approved plans, no above ground development shall start until details and samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory visual appearance in the interest of the amenities of the area.

- 9 Notwithstanding the approved plans, no above ground development shall start until a revised landscaping scheme and a detailed planting plan have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The landscaping scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved

details, to the appropriate British Standard, not later than the end of the first planting season following completion of the approved development. The landscaping shall thereafter be retained. Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the locality.

- 10 For a period of no less than 5 years after planting, any trees or plants which are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced as soon as is reasonably practicable with others of the same species, size and number as originally approved in the landscaping scheme.
Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the locality.
- 11 The development shall not be brought into use until the visibility splays have been provided in accordance with plans to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and thereafter nothing over 0.6m in height above the level of the carriageway shall be permitted to remain within the visibility splay unless agreed in advance with the LPA.
Reason: In the interests of highway safety.
- 12 The development shall not be brought into use until provision for the turning, loading and unloading and the parking of vehicles shall have been made within the site in accordance with the approved details and shall thereafter be permanently retained for use in connection with the riding stables.
Reason: To make provision for off street parking and manoeuvring for the purpose of highway safety.
- 13 Notwithstanding the approved plans, the development shall not be brought into use until plans for the site access have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and shall thereafter be installed and maintained in accordance with the approved plans.
Reason: To provide satisfactory access and in the interest of highway safety.
- 14 The occupation of the mobile home hereby approved shall be limited to a person solely employed on the site and to their dependants as long as the site is used as an equestrian centre. Reason: The site is within the countryside where new dwellings are not normally permitted except where there is a justified over riding need.
- 15 The mobile home hereby permitted must be removed within three months of the cessation of the use of the site for the riding stables hereby permitted. Reason: The building is permitted in light of the particular circumstances of the case and the site is not appropriate for permanent retention of the mobile home without the riding stables use.
- 16 No riding lessons shall take place on the site except between the hours of 8am to 7pm (Monday to Friday) and 8am to 5.30pm (Saturday & Sunday) and directional lighting for the arena shall only be used within those hours and switched off at all other times.
Reason: To protect the amenity of the occupiers of nearby properties.
- 17 No hardstanding, structures or buildings shall be located within 4 metres of the

ditch along the sites southern boundary.

Reason: To prevent damage to the watercourse.

- 18 Note to Applicant: In accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018), Eastleigh Borough Council takes a positive approach to the handling of development proposals so as to achieve, whenever possible, a positive outcome and to ensure all proposals are dealt with in a timely manner.
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Report:

This application has been referred to Committee because the applicant is the daughter of Cllr Boulton who is a member of the Hedge End, West End and Botley Local Area Committee. This application site is also owned by Eastleigh Borough Council.

Description of Application

1. The applicant operates a riding school, stables and horse rescue centre from a nearby site (Russell's Equestrian Centre). The applicant has to relocate from their current site and is keen to continue operating within the local area and so this site has been chosen to replace their existing facility. The proposed site is smaller than the existing property and so the facility has been downsized from the current operation.
2. The planning application comprises; the erection of 1.no courtyard building and 1.no isolation block which accommodates 20 stables in total; 1.no double unit mobile home for on-site manager's accommodation, 1.no outdoor arena with directional lighting, provision of 7no. on site vehicular parking spaces utilising the existing access from Allington Lane.
3. The planning application is supported by:
 - Planning, Design and Access Statement by Paris Smith (reference PXX.PXX.120179.1.03291266.1)
 - Preliminary Ecological Assessment by ECOSA (dated Sep 18)
 - Ecological Impact Assessment by ECOSA (dated Nov 18)
 - Surface Water Drainage Report by M3 Mayer Brown (dated Nov 18)
 - Landscaping Plan by SC Architecture (drawing number 4132-P-4)
 - Lighting Assessment & Strategy by Design for Lighting (dated Nov 18)

Site Characteristics

4. The application site comprises a tree lined field to the south of Allington Lane with some areas of shrub and older trees near the site entrance. The field is relatively flat with a noticeable slope to a ditch hidden within the vegetation along the Allington Lane boundary. The site is mostly enclosed by mature trees and vegetation with a small open section along its southern boundary, opposite the site entrance. At this point the edge of the field is marked by low bar fencing.

There is a further ditch that runs alongside the sites southern boundary and connects into the local waterways.

Character of Locality

5. The site is located in a stretch of countryside to the north of West End. The site forms part of a collection of gently undulating fields, which are used for grazing horses. Opposite the site is the entrance to Itchen Valley Country Park and to the north is a row of detached residential properties. There are examples of other horse riding stables found within the vicinity, including the applicant's current site at Russell's Equestrian Centre located to the southwest of this site.

Relevant Planning History

- Application Site - None
- Russell's Equestrian Centre (current site of the business)
Z/34891 - Construction of stables, barn, exercise school, office, mobile home and access road – Permitted 1998

Representations Received

6. The planning application has received 68 letters supporting the development. The letters were mainly from people who had attended the current riding school and strongly value the experience and expertise given to them by the two riding instructors.
7. The supporting letters also included representations from the British Horse Society, Riding for the Disabled, Association of British Riding Schools, Riverside Equine Vets and the Pony Club. These letters outline the need for a mobile home on site; a range of facilities on site; the valuable work the riding school is doing with different sectors of the community including disabled and young people; and the organisation providing a caring environment for unwanted and abused horses to recuperate. A further letter has been received from the National Equine Welfare Council, confirming the riding centre is part of their program and benefits from regular inspections.
8. The planning application has received nine letters of objection, mainly from Allington Road residents living close to the application site. Their objections include; development against planning policy, Highway safety concerns as the site access has poor visibility and vehicles travel at high speeds along Allington Lane; horses leaving the site causing a safety hazard; additional noise, smells and dust causing a disruption to residential properties; directional lighting used in arena causing a nuisance to nearby dwellings and distraction to drivers using Allington Lane; silica based product used in the arena causing a health hazard; questioning why a mobile home is needed on the site; and requesting further ecological information to be submitted. Some of the objection letters considered that Councillor Bolton should be named on the application form as she is involved in running the operation. A further letter complained that only five weeks had been given for comments on the planning application.

Comment on Consultation Responses and Representations Received

9. Comments are noted. The proposal will be assessed against the relevant planning policies and its impact on highway safety, amenity of residents and ecology will be considered in the assessment section.
10. Under Environmental Regulations employers have to do everything reasonably practical to eliminate worker exposure to crystalline silica and this can be managed by using medium coarse sand, using watering systems and dust control products. The Council's Environmental Health Specialist has advised proposed silica based products are very unlikely to exceed a level that will be harmful to human health.
11. The horse riding lessons will take place within the outdoor arena, which is the same situation as the current facility at Russell's Equestrian Centre. As such, whilst there maybe occasions that the horses will need to cross Allington Lane it will be no greater than the current situation.
12. Article 15 of the Development Management Procedure Order (as amended) requires Local Planning Authorities to undertake a formal 21 day period of consultation for planning applications. The planning application followed this procedure and adjoining residents along Allington Lane were notified in writing of the application. A site notice was also displayed for the duration of the formal consultation period.
13. The planning framework allows any person to apply for planning permission, providing the correct notice is served on the landowner. As such there is no legal requirement for Councillor Bolton to be the applicant. However, to ensure transparency in the decision making process this scheme is placed before the local area committee for a decision.

Consultation Responses

14. **Environment Agency – No Objection**
15. Amended layout plans have been received moving the manager's accommodation 4m away from the edge of the ditch that runs along the southern side of the application site. On this basis the Environment Agency has removed their objection.
16. **Hampshire Country Council Highways Officer – No Objection** (subject to conditions on visibility splay, access and turning space)

Access

17. The site will use an existing access off Allington Lane, which is overgrown and partially covered. Clearance work will be required to achieve the 4.8m width of the access as shown on the plans. It would therefore be requested that a condition be imposed to ensure the access is constructed in accordance to submitted plans.

18. The visibility when entering and exiting the access road is somewhat obscured by vegetation to the left and right. A pre-commencement condition is recommended to demonstrate that the required visibility splays are achievable at the site access. These visibility splays should be set to the specific recorded speeds, with appropriate distances set out in line with Manual for Streets or Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.
19. Given the site access is overgrown, this is likely to involve some cutting back of bushes, etc. and a condition should also be in place to ensure that any landscaping within the required visibility splay is kept to a height of no more than 0.6m in height.

Parking

20. Seven formal parking spaces are provided for onsite and there is opportunity for further non-obstructive informal parking to be catered. Furthermore, it may be possible for customers to utilise Itchen Valley Country Park for overflow if required.
21. The internal layout is acceptable with adequate space to turn vehicles on-site (inclusive of larger vehicles associated with equestrian use), which will enable serving and forward gear access and egress to take place.

Trip Generation

22. It is the opinion of the Highway Authority that the proposed use is unlikely to generate a significant level of traffic or cause severe highway safety issues on the surrounding roads. As such, no developer contributions are requested.

Ecology Specialist – No objection

23. The submission includes an Ecological Impact Assessment, Surface Water Drainage Plan, Lighting Assessment and Biological Mitigation and Enhancement Plan (BEMP). In principle these documents are acceptable, although some technical issues have been raised by the Ecology Specialist on the wavelength of the proposed lighting, the route of the foul drainage and the proximity of car parking spaces 6 and 7 to the over mature oak tree.
24. The surface water drainage plan will also need to be expanded upon to address water quality, which will inform the Council's to Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA). The HRA will then need Natural England's approval before a decision can be issued.
25. The Local Planning Authority has now received amended plans, which relocating the parking spaces away from the tree. The agent is also reviewing the outstanding issues and intends to submit further information to address these points. Pre-commencement conditions will be imposed securing a construction environmental management plan and sustainable drainage plan.

26. **Tree Specialist – No objection** (subject to submission of arboricultural reports and tree protection)
27. The principal arboricultural features appear to be retained in the proposals. The mature trees to the east are given space from the arena and these will have to be protected using appropriate tree protection measures.
28. The siting of the stables is close to the mature vegetation, but this is acceptable providing tree protection measures are taken.
29. The proposal will retain the over mature oak tree close to the access point and includes the planning of three silver birches to the south of the isolation yard.
30. **West End Parish Council – No objection**, but raised concerns on Highways and Access; Speed of Traffic and Lighting affecting residents
31. **Landscaping Specialist – Comments**
32. Since the proposed development site is in countryside, the design principles should be towards visual mitigation and retaining and enhancing biodiversity links. The landscaping scheme needs to provide more detail and it is recommended that a planting plan be submitted as a pre-commencement condition.

Policy Context: Designation Applicable to Site

- Outside Built-up Area Boundary - Countryside

Development Plan Saved Policies and Emerging Local Plan Policies

- **Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review 2001-2011 Saved Policies:** 1.CO, 18.CO, 25.NC, 36.ES, 45.ES, 59.BE & 154.OS.
- **Submitted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011 - 2029, July 2014**
The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 was submitted for examination in July 2014 but the Inspector concluded that insufficient housing was being provided for in the Plan and that it was unsound. While this has not been withdrawn and remains a material consideration, it can therefore be considered to have extremely limited weight in the determination of this application.
- **Emerging Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036**
The Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State on 31 October 2018 and the Council is awaiting confirmation of the date of examination. The adoption of the Local Plan is anticipated in summer 2019. Given the status of the emerging plan, it is considered that limited weight can be attributed to it.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- Supplementary Planning Document: Quality Places (November 2011)

- Biodiversity (December 2009)

National Planning Policy Framework

33. The National Planning Policy Framework aims to achieve sustainable development, which can be separated into three interdependent objectives; economic, social and environmental.
34. Paragraph 11 states that development that accords with an up to date development plans should be approved without delay. Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the most relevant policies are not up to date, then planning permission should be granted unless:
 - the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.
35. For this application relevant paragraphs within the National Planning Policy Framework include:
36. Paragraph 79 outlines that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more specific criteria apply including where there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;
37. Paragraph 83 explains that planning policies and decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. It also allows the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.
38. Paragraph 84 emphasises that planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable.

National Planning Practice Guidance

39. Where material, this guidance should be afforded weight in the consideration of planning applications.

Assessment of Proposal: Development Plan and / or Legislative Background

40. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:-

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

Background Information

41. The application has been put in by the managers of Russell's Equestrian Centre to replace their existing facility. The new site is owned and maintained by Eastleigh Borough Council as part of their property portfolio. However, the land ownership cannot be considered as part of this planning application. The planning application can only be assessed against material planning considerations, the starting point being the adopted development plan (Eastleigh Local Plan Review 2001-2011).

Development Plan Policies

42. Saved Policy 1.CO - prevents development within the countryside unless; it is necessary for agricultural, forestry or horticultural purposes; it is for an outdoor recreational use; it is essential for a public utility or an existing health or educational facility; or covered by a specific countryside policy with the existing local plan.
43. Saved Policy 18.CO - looks to refuse development that fails to respect, or has an adverse impact on the intrinsic character of the landscape.
44. Saved Policy 25.NC - development which will adversely affect a habitat or feature of importance for wild fauna and flora will not be permitted, unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that: (i) the benefits of the development outweigh the adverse impacts; (ii) the adverse impacts are unavoidable, and (iii) appropriate measures are taken which would mitigate or compensate for any adverse impact.
45. Saved Policy 36.ES - permission will be refused for proposals which do not incorporate well designed lighting, where lighting is necessary. Lighting should be concentrated in those areas where it is required and spillage, either horizontally or vertically, should be minimised. The size and design of the lighting columns should not detract from the character of the locality.
46. Saved Policy 45.ES - development proposals must incorporate adequate measures for the disposal of surface water from the development including,

where practicable, source control techniques and sustainable drainage systems, incorporating defined arrangements for the future maintenance of the system.

47. Saved Policy 59.BE of the Local Plan requires development to take full and proper account of the context of the site including the character and appearance of the locality and be appropriate in mass, scale, materials, layout, design and siting. It also requires a high standard of landscape design, have a satisfactory means of access and layout for vehicles, cyclist and pedestrians, make provision for refuse and cycle storage and avoid unduly impacting on neighbouring uses through overlooking, loss of light, loss of outlook, noise and fumes.
48. Saved 154.OS - allows proposal for commercial stables or riding school where a dwelling already exists on the site; where they do not have an adverse impact on the character of the locality, and where they do not have a detrimental impact on the local road network.

Principle of development

49. The application seeks approval for the provision of a riding centre incorporating stables, small barns and feed stores, as well as an outdoor arena and adjoining isolation block. In addition, the proposals include the provision of a double unit mobile home, which would provide staff accommodation in order to allow the manager of the facility to live on site.
50. The site lies within designated countryside within the Council's adopted Local Plan where Saved Policy 1.CO applies to new development proposals. This policy seeks to protect the countryside from inappropriate development whilst allowing for development needs to be met where a countryside location is genuinely necessitated. In this respect, this policy allows for development that is for an outdoor recreational use providing that does not require the provision of buildings, hardstanding or structures which are of a form, scale or design which would demonstrably harm the character of the locality.
51. Additionally Saved Policy 154.OS deals specifically with equestrian recreational development. This policy recognises that new stables and riding schools associated with equestrian leisure activities often lead to pressure for additional dwellings in the countryside and accordingly permits such development only where, in the case of a commercial stable or riding school, a dwelling already exists on site.
52. Therefore, whilst it is accepted that equestrian uses are outdoor recreational uses for which a countryside location is generally required, as no dwelling currently exists on site, the proposals are in the strictest terms in conflict with the provisions of these policies. The provision of a new dwelling on the site would also be in conflict with Saved Policy 1.CO as outlined above. The application is therefore contrary to the development plan and for planning permission to be granted, there would have to be other material considerations that provide support for this scheme.

53. One such material consideration is the Revised National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018), which recognises that local businesses and community needs in rural areas may sometimes be found beyond the built up area settlements. In these circumstances it's important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (paragraph 84).
54. The section below will examine the particular nature of the equestrian use proposed and the need for such a facility in this location. The report will then go onto assess the detailed matters of the development.

The need and justification for the development

55. The application seeks approval for the provision of a riding centre with an associated manager's dwelling in the form of a mobile home. The application includes a Planning Statement, which provides background information and additional detail in support of the proposals. This statement sets out that the proposed development is to allow for the relocation of the existing Russell's Equestrian Centre that currently operates from New Place on Allington Lane, a site which lies 150m to the south-west of the application site. The relocation of the business and facilities is due to the expiration of the lease on the existing premises and there being no reasonable prospect of this being renewed. The current site incorporates a mobile home, which provides on-site residential accommodation for the site manager.
56. The information provided states that Russell's Equestrian Centre has operated within the local area for 42 years and provides a base for the Epona Trust, a non-profit making organisation that specialises in the rescue and rehabilitation of horses and ponies from difficult and challenging backgrounds. These horses often require specialist and dedicated individual care, with such animals being referred to the centre from a range of agencies, including the RSPCA, for rehabilitation and recovery. The supporting statement sets out that the mobile home is, in part, necessitated on site owing to the vulnerable nature of the horses for which it caters, with these animals being more prone to getting "cast", where horses have lain down or rolled and manage to become stuck on their backs, something which can lead horses to panic, potentially resulting in injury or even death. The supporting details set out therefore, that not only is the mobile home required for security but a permanent staff presence on site allows for a greater level of care to be provided for these horses than would normally be necessitated. As with the existing Centre, the linking of the mobile home to the facility is something that could be controlled by planning condition.
57. In addition to equine welfare, the centre provides riding facilities and training for a wide spectrum of the community incorporating children and adults of all ages, levels and abilities, with approximately one third of the Centre's riders having special needs. The Centre also has links and provides services to a range of groups within the local area, including community groups and educational providers.

58. In these respects, it is evident that the facility is one which is well established and highly-regarded in the locality and which provides somewhat of a unique range of social benefits to the community in this particular field, as well as positively supporting equine welfare. These benefits are evidenced within third party representations received in relation to the application, with these including letters of support from not only users of the existing Centre but also groups such as the Association of British Riding Schools, the Pony Club and the organisation Riding for the Disabled Association. The application outlines that there are no alternative existing equestrian sites for the facility to relocate to within the locality and that the close proximity of the application site would enable them to continue to provide this range of services to the local community, which would otherwise be lost within this area. It would also from a practical perspective enable the Centre to continue to utilise the adjacent fields which they currently use as part of their existing operations which run from their current premises.
59. On balance, therefore, and taking account of the range of factors outlined above, it is considered that in this particular instance, the proposed use and structures are appropriate and the principle of development, which is contrary to saved policy 154.OS, can be supported. Any planning approval, however, is subject to the proposals being acceptable in design, scale and layout, as well as in respect of its other technical impacts. These matters are dealt with in the sections below.

Design, Scale and Layout

60. The scale and layout of the development has been designed around the practical requirements of running a horse riding school, stables and rescue centre that caters for people with a range of complex disabilities and working within the planning constraints of the site.
61. The facility accommodates twenty stables (which is less than provided on the current site) and these will be split between the main courtyard building and separate isolation block, to prevent the spread of infections from the rescued horses. The mobile home is strategically positioned towards the front of the site, where the managers have views over the car parking area and into both stable blocks so can ensure the security of the facility and horse welfare.
62. The proposal also includes a 20m by 60m outdoor arena, which is required for the larger horses, for carrying out specialist training such as join up work and to enable both riding instructors to teach at the same time. The horse riding lessons will all take place within the arena, with the isolation block to the south providing some shade within the summer months.
63. While the amount of development is substantial, its scale and layout has been carefully thought through to enable to the facility to continue operating successfully and to work within the constraints of the site. The countryside location of the equestrian centre is appropriate and these types of horse riding facilities are a common feature of rural areas.

Highway Safety and Impact on the Countryside Location

64. The horse riding centre will be accessed off Allington Lane, which is a busy 40mph road between West End and Fair Oak. Highway safety concerns have been raised by some of the nearby residents as the access is over grown and on a bend with limited visibility and it was felt vehicles travel along Allington Lane in excess of the speed limit.
65. The proposal will intensify the use of the existing access of Allington Lane, from an occasional field access to being in regular daily use from the riding school clients. At present the access is overgrown with limited visibility in either direction. However, the Highway Authority are of the opinion that with clearance work and the introduction of visibility splays than the access can be made safe for the proposed use and they have raised no objection.
66. The agent has commissioned a speed survey of cars traveling along Allington Lane to determine the size of the visibility splays required. The speed survey and visibility splay plans are being prepared and an update will be provided at the Local Area Committee.
67. In the interim an indicative visibility splay drawing has been provided to indicate the likely range of the sight lines required. It is expected that the proposal will involve extensive cutting back of the existing vegetation where it has been allowed to grow over the highway land next to the sites northern boundary with Allington Lane. The vegetation comprises mostly brambles, shrubs and small self-seeded trees with moderate ecology value and no important trees.
68. Most of the clearance work would be by the site access next to the proposed parking areas. In this position the vegetation is thicker extending well into the site and even with the clearance work will still retain a significant level of visual screening. There are also sections within the parking area where existing vegetation can be reinforced with further planting.
69. The vegetation is thinner next to the courtyard stable block and some vegetation would need to be cut back to provide the visibility splays. As such parts of the courtyard stable building will be visible through the thinner parts of the vegetation, especially during the winter months. However, the low single storey building will be fairly unobtrusive within the street scene and this type of stable building will not look out of place within its countryside setting.
70. Limited clearance work would be needed to the front of the outdoor arena as this structure is further away from the access point and should be outside of the visibility splays. The outdoor arena and its lighting columns sit below the height of the vegetation line and so there should not be significant views of the structure from Allington Lane. Furthermore, the outdoor arena is positioned further into the site than the courtyard stables and so provides the opportunity for further planting to infill any weaknesses in the line of the vegetation along this section of Allington Lane. Details of the revised landscaping scheme and a full planting plan will need to be approved through a pre-commencement condition and will need to follow the Landscaping Officers advice.

71. Indicative visibility splays have also been provided for the western side of the access, which due to the increasingly sharp curve could require the loss of a very extensive amount of vegetation. However, it is the applicant's intention that vehicles leaving the site will only turn left, with vehicles wanting to travel in an eastwards direction using the roundabout further along Allington Lane. Engineering solutions will be explored for the left only turn, although it may be down to the site managers to enforce this rule which is already in place at their current site at Russell's Equestrian which also sits on a particularly sharp bend. With a left hand only turn the thick vegetation to the west can be retained and so continue to contribute to the semi-rural character of the lane.

Car Parking and Vehicle Movements

72. Seven car parking spaces are provided within the site, which is considered sufficient for the size of the riding centre. There is also the option of more informal parking within the site on the rare occasions that more spaces are required. Furthermore, there is sufficient space within the parking area for vehicles, including larger vehicles towing horse boxes to manoeuvre within the site and therefore leave and enter onto Allington Lane in a forward gear.
73. Overall due to the relatively low traffic flows associated with the development proposals, and the staggered position of the access compared to Itchen Valley Country Park it is not anticipated that conflict of movement will generate a significant road safety issue. No objection has been raised by the Highway Authority on this issue.

Residential Amenity

74. To the north of the site is a row of residential dwellings. However, the proposal is a reasonable distance away from these dwellings and they sit behind a line of vegetation. As such the proposed single storey buildings and structures are not considered to unacceptably harm the outlook of the Allington Lane dwellings.
75. Third party letters have been received from some of the nearby residents concerned about the noise and disturbance caused by the new equestrian centre and the use of directional lighting within the outdoor arena.
76. However, the equestrian centre is not a particularly noisy use with the main activities and horse riding lessons being throughout the day and early evening when background noise levels are naturally higher and less likely to disturb nearby residents. A condition will be used to ensure that riding lessons finish by 5.30pm during the week and 7pm at weekends.
77. For evening lessons during the winter time it is necessary to light the outdoor arena, which will consist of eight directional lights mounted on 4m high poles at regular intervals along the edge of the arena. The lights will be installed with a low angle of tilt, which focusses most of the light onto the arena.

78. The site is within a rural location where the institute of lighting professionals recommends a maximum lighting level of 5 lux pre curfew, which is usually 11pm. A lighting survey has been submitted demonstrating that the light spill values at ground level are very low (close to 0.17 lux) and mainly contained within the outdoor arena. As such the level of the proposed lighting will not unacceptably disturb the adjoining residents and not materially impact on the rural character of the area, which already has some street lights providing a level of background lighting.

Trees and Ecology

79. The site contains a couple of mature oak trees alongside its eastern boundary, which are the only high quality trees within site and immediate surrounding of significant amenity value within the site. The outdoor arena has been carefully positioned so that it does not harm the tree roots. The Council's tree officer has raised no objection to the proposal subject to the submission of arboricultural reports and tree protection being in place during the development period.
80. In terms of ecology a lighting assessment, ecological impact assessment and biological mitigation and enhancement plan have been submitted to the Local Planning Authority. The ecological impact assessment looks at the impact of the proposal on protected species and the biological mitigation and enhancement plan describes how these habitats will be managed for biodiversity and how they link into the wider ecological network. These reports have been reviewed and acceptable by the Council's Ecology Officer, with some additional information required. An amended site plan has been received moving the two car parking spaces away from the old oak tree, which is being retained for its biodiversity value as it provides a habitat for a number of species.
81. The site comprises semi-improved grassland bounded by a mixed hedgerow and treeline with a small derelict building in the western corner. The proposal entails the removal of the building, some clearance of the semi improved grassland and a partial loss of hedgerow particularly along the Allington Lane boundary. This loss of habitat is compensated for within the biological mitigation and enhancement plan.
82. The site offers suitability for tree-roosting bats and moderate suitability for foraging and commuting bats. A reasonable level of vegetation is to be retained and a sensitive lighting system installed to reduce the impact to foraging and community bats. Full details of the lighting system are provided within the submitted lighting assessment, which uses directional lighting to minimise light spill into the vegetation. In order to avoid disturbance to bats, the lighting specification is as far away from the blue end of the spectrum as possible while within the acceptable range for horses.
83. The site offers suitable habitat for hazel dormice, and nesting birds, while field margins are suitable for badgers, small numbers of overwintering birds, great crested newts and hedgehogs. No common reptiles were recorded within the surveys. Some long term habitat would occur with further vegetation lost to provide the necessary visibility splays and a view will be sought from the Ecology

Officer to the extent of this impact and whether this can be mitigated for within the Biological Mitigation and Enhancement Plan. This includes creating extra habitats and features within the site, e.g. scrub, woodland, hedgerow strengthening, wildflower / unimproved grassland areas and species specifications. An update will be provided at the Local Area Committee.

84. Due to the time constraints, at this stage the application will have to assume the presence of great crested newts within the nearby ponds and therefore that the site provides possible terrestrial habitat around the existing field margins. Appropriate mitigation is included within the Biological Mitigation and Enhancement Plan, which includes a translocation exercise.
85. A pre-commencement condition will also be imposed for a construction environmental management plan (CEMP) to ensure the surrounding habitats are protected during the construction works. Condition 10 sets out the details of what has to be included within the CEMP.

Drainage and Water Courses

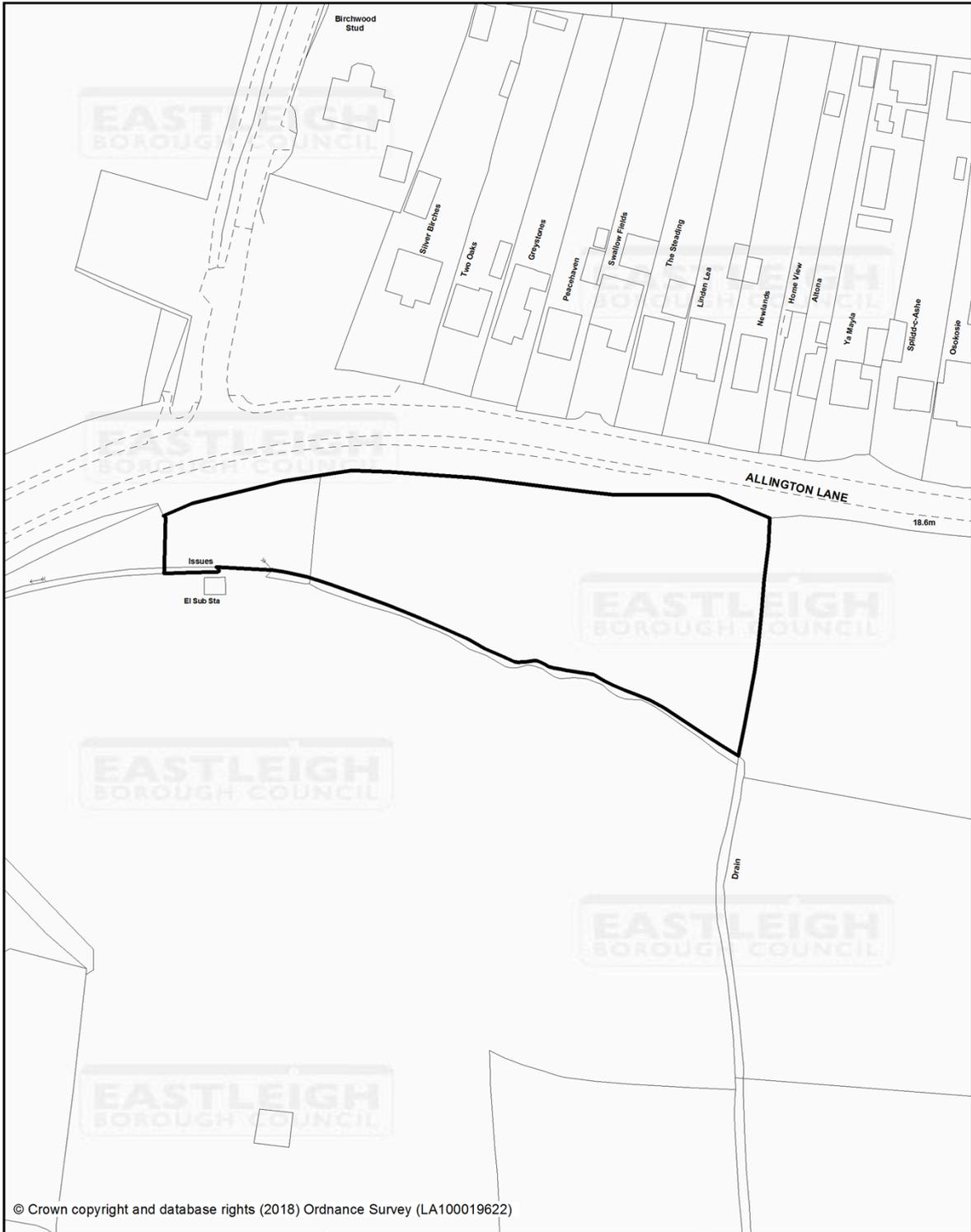
86. The on-site manager's accommodation has been moved 4m into the site, where it will not affect the integrity of the ditch running along the southern side of the site that feeds into the main water courses. As such the Environment Agency has removed their objection to the proposal.
87. The proposal makes provision for drainage. The majority of the surfacing proposed is permeable, which is favourable as this is more likely to maintain the existing hydrological regime regarding flows and water quality although water quality will still need to be addressed within a revised drainage statement.
88. While it is understood that manure will be removed from the site, it is essential that any run-off from this does not have any negative impact on the retained or enhanced habitats on and off site. The run-off from the stables and arena is likely to be high in nutrients and Sustainable Drainage (SUDs) details would need to be provided as a pre-commencement condition to ensure that the any effects of nutrient enrichment do not extend beyond the soakaway. The soakaway proposals may be modified to provide suitable natural treatment of the run-off (a more robust SuDS feature), for example, by provided appropriate planning which will also provide ecological habitat.

Conclusion

89. As set out within the report there is considered to be over riding material considerations to warrant approving the principle of the development, including the provision of a mobile home. The development would alter the appearance of the site and would require some removal of vegetation, but the structures and use are suitable for a countryside location and would not detrimentally impact on the character of Allington Lane or residential amenity. The proposal uses an established access, but its use will be intensified and whilst the Highway Authority have raised no objection to the development, further work is being

undertaken to establish the sight lines and the resultant impact on existing vegetation.

90. Prior to committee, officers expect to have been provided with a highway technical note informed by a speed survey and will have discussed the impact of any future loss of vegetation with the Council's Ecology Specialist. Subject to a positive response and clarity on the highway matters, the proposal is recommended for approval with conditions as listed.



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