

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P13/V2253/DC</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	DEEMED CONSENT
<b>REGISTERED</b>	15.10.2013
<b>PARISH</b>	ABINGDON
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Julie Mayhew-Archer Tony de Vere
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Vale of White Horse District Council
<b>SITE</b>	The White Horse Leisure & Tennis Centre Audlett Drive Abingdon, OX14 3PJ
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Provision of new car parking area for 99 vehicles with revised access arrangements at White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre, Audlett Drive, Abingdon
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	None
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	451204/197498
<b>OFFICER</b>	Mark Doodes

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#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site is the popular sports centre on Audlett Drive. Specifically the development site is a rectangular area of undeveloped open space land (6.5ha) to the west of the main car park (which was constructed in 1998).
- 1.2 This application is referred to planning committee due to the works being undertaken on District land by the District itself. The site location plan can be found **attached** at appendix 1.

#### 2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The District seeks to expand the existing car parking provision at the centre by 99 spaces (up from 238 spaces) to 337 in total plus disabled spaces. No further cycle cycle spaces are proposed. A SUDS drainage scheme is proposed including permeable surfacing.
- 2.2 The area will measure 65m x 32m. The plans can be found **attached** at appendix 2.

#### 3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 Town Council – No comments to date  
County Archaeologist (VWHDC) - No objection  
Crime Prevention Design Advisor - No objection  
Drainage Engineer (Vale of White Horse District Council) - No objection  
Highways Liaison Officer (Oxfordshire County Council) – holding objection – details of (staff) green travel plan are requested – officers are satisfied that this matter can be controlled by condition.  
Countryside Officer(South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse) - No objection  
Leisure (Developer Contributions - Vale of White Horse) - No objection  
Arboriculturalist – Tree survey requested  
Neighbour Object (1) – poor design and materials

#### 4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 [P10/V1836](#) - Approved (14/05/2012)

Construction of two 3-storey office units to rear of site.

[P11/V2553/DA](#) - Approved (07/12/2011) Installation of solar panels on leisure centre roof

[P10/V0742](#) - Other Outcome (11/08/2010)

Construction of two 3-storey office units to rear of site.

[P04/V0185/DA](#) - Approved (07/06/2004)

Provision of 60 additional car-parking spaces for staff parking and overflow parking.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 policies;

DC1 - Design

DC5 - Access

DC6 - Landscaping

DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses

L6 - Major Leisure and Entertainment Facilities

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The prime considerations in this application are that the test in policy L6 which require such works to support a key leisure asset for the district. Highways matters and design also feature as considerations.

6.2 Support of leisure facilities – The White Horse leisure centre is a key leisure asset and policy L6 seeks to protect such assets. The land in question will be used to provide parking to support the continued growth of centre and leisure destination for Abingdon and the wider area. The land use proposed is not a diversification or dilution of the centres facilities and as such the works are considered to accord with policy L6.

6.3 OCC Highways have made a holding objection to the works on the grounds that there could be considered to be an overprovision of staff parking. However, it is noted that the car park is not ticket / warden controlled and parking is free. The leisure centre management already encourage staff to travel to work by walking or cycling and this is manifest in the provision of 25 cycle spaces on site. However it is accepted by planning officers that this provision needs to be audited for suitability and capacity in light of the growth of car parking. The provision of secure means of cycle storage is a key influencing factor in the travel choices made by both staff, and more importantly, leisure users. Therefore the use of a condition to require the Leisure team to provide a Green Travel Plan prior to commencement of the development and a review of the cycle arrangements is considered to be the most appropriate way forward. A condition has been imposed, which once satisfied will ensure that the scheme complies with policy DC5 of the local plan.

6.4 No objections have been raised by any other statutory consultee listed in section 3. No land use conflicts arise from the works proposed as the car parking is integral to the leisure centre, making the scheme compliant with policy DC9 of the local plan.

6.5 A single neighbour objection to the works has been received, citing the works as of poor quality and lacking a Tree survey. The local resident was indeed correct, no tree survey had been undertaken. This can be controlled through condition, as

recommended by the tree officer who has undertaken a site visit. The loss of some good examples of local mid-aged trees is regrettable and should be off set by replacement planting in the evirons. This can, again, be covered by condition to the satisfaction of the LPA.

- 6.6 The same local resident commented also on the lack of soft landscaping on the area and the unimaginative layout and design. The case officer also notes these comments and echoes these concerns, the main car park is well landscaped and designed. A condition requiring such matters to be approved by the LPA prior to the commencement of the development has been imposed on the consent. It is considered that these matters are not compelling enough to warrant the refusal of the scheme and can be progressed under condition. Landscaping officers from Planning are well placed to offer this advice. This condition is considered reasonable and fitting as the landscaping works will not go to the heart of the principle of the scheme (the provision of further parking) and will only serve to improve the aesthetics of the scheme and in doing so allow the scheme to comply with policy DC6 of the local plan.
- 6.7 Finally the open space which will be lost is not considered to be of great amenity value and forms part of the setting of the leisure centre rather than an area for leisure users per se. Therefore the loss for leisure purposes is not considered to outweigh the gain that the leisure centre will yield in terms of parking and potential safety issues at peak times which are known to occur in the local area. The works will also be barely visible from the main entrance and site entrance.

#### 7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The works are considered to support the successful operation of the leisure centres whilst allowing a wider range of events to be held at the centre that would otherwise have proven troublesome through inadequate parking. Subject to a soft landscaping scheme being developed and the conditions listed below, the works are considered to be acceptable.

#### 8.0 RECOMMENDATION

**To grant planning permission, subject to the following:**

1. Commencement 3 yrs - full planning permission
2. Approved plans
3. No surface water drainage to highway
4. Highways – green travel plan (including cycle storage audit)
5. Landscaping scheme (trees and shrubs only)

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