

APPLICATION NO.	P15/V2043/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	28.8.2015
PARISH	APPLEFORD
WARD MEMBER(S)	Gervase Duffield
APPLICANT	First Great Western
SITE	Land at Hill Farm Didcot
PROPOSAL	Two year temporary consent for an 814 space car park located on agricultural land at Hill Farm, Didcot. The car park is to accommodate displaced users of the Foxhall Road car park while a new multi storey car park is constructed.
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	452239/191924
OFFICER	Shaun Wells

SUMMARY

The planning application has been called to planning committee because of an objection received from Appleford Parish Council. The proposal is supported by officers for the following reasons:

- The proposal is strategically important and in the interest of the public, given that it would facilitate temporary parking provision whilst a new permanent multi-storey car park is constructed for Didcot Parkway
- Given the temporary nature of the development, the screening that will be afforded and restoration to be agreed, the proposal would not have a significantly adverse impact (in the long term) on the landscape and as such the proposal is considered to be in accordance with planning policies.
- Whilst the site is within a designated 'Open Gap' within the Local Plan (Policy NE10), the proposal is considered acceptable in principle given its temporary nature, given that it would be considered as sustainable development reflecting the economic, social and environmental roles that sustainable development should reflect, as identified within the NPPF.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 As the population in and around Didcot continues to grow along with ever increasing passenger demand for rail use, the existing car parking facilities at Didcot Parkway Railway Station have been identified as requiring significant expansion. A new multi-storey car park is therefore planned for the Foxhall Road site which is currently at ground level only.

1.2 The planning application before Members now is for a temporary car park to receive all of the current Foxhall Road customers while construction work takes place on the new multi-storey car park. The existing Foxhall Road site falls within South Oxfordshire's District boundary, however the site of the temporary carpark falls within the Vale of Whitehorse District boundary. The new multi-storey car park at Didcot Parkway is a major investment providing significant customer, environmental and

economic benefit to the area and is very much in the public interest. This can only be constructed however with the provision of a temporary car park.

- 1.3 The proposed multi-storey carpark has been deemed to be permitted development by South Oxfordshire District Council. (Under schedule 2 part 8 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, because it is within operational land in the ownership and control of First Great Western. Planning permission is however required for the temporary carpark because the site is on land outside the ownership and control of the operator First Great Western.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 At most 150 spaces out of the current 890 spaces could be kept on the site during the construction works. Keeping the public car parking on the site adjacent to major construction works has numerous health and safety implications which require complex management. The management of these risks will create an additional safety, cost and programme risk to the construction of the new multi-storey car park. First Great Western concluded that the safest solution would be to provide all replacement public use car parking on a single site away from the multi-storey car park with a shuttle bus service to transport customers between the temporary car park and Didcot Parkway station. This approach would also provide customers with certainty of an available space. Foxhall Rd currently provides 890 spaces, with a regular use of around 800 spaces. It was therefore determined that a temporary car park providing 814 spaces would provide certainty of a space during the construction period of the multi-storey car park.
- 2.2 The proposed temporary car park would be located within a 2.66 hectare site **attached (Appendix 1 and 2)**, which is a field with access via a new junction off an existing road leading to Hill Farm from the A4130. Southmead Industrial Park is located to the south of the site and southern side of the A4130. To the east the site is bound by railway lines. To the immediate north is a continuation of arable farmland currently in pasture. Further north is a wood recycling yard (J.James Ltd Pallet and Wood Recycling), and to the north west is Sutton Courtney Landfill site. These operations, and Hansons Aggregates also to the north, use the access off the A4130 up to Hill Farm which would also be used to access the proposed temporary carpark. The closest residential properties would be approximately 150 metres to the South East at Tweed Drive on the southern side of the A1430 and south east of the Ladygrove bridge over the railway line.
- 2.3 The temporary car park would provide 814 new car parking spaces, 16 motorcycle spaces and 42 bicycle spaces. Disabled parking will be retained at Didcot Parkway Station. All bays would be gravel however roadways within the car park would be asphalt. There would be three bus stops within the site which would include 3 bike shelters. The bus stops are required for the transit of passengers to Didcot Parkway Railway Station. A new access would be made off the access road to Hilltop Farm north of the A4130. After completion, a shuttle bus service will be provided to transport customers from the temporary car park to Didcot station collecting passengers every 10 minutes at peak times.
- 2.4 The top soil that has been excavated during construction will be formed into mounds along the northern boundary. This would enable the topsoil to be stored on site therefore reducing construction vehicle movements. The top soil will then be replaced on the field when the car park surfacing is removed at the end of the temporary planning permission. The top soil mound would also serve to screen the site from the north. No tree or shrub planting is proposed as the permission sought is for a temporary period of two years.

- 2.5 Low spillage luminaire lighting with recessed lamps have been chosen to minimise light pollution. They are to be mounted on 8 metre high columns and will be fitted with time clocks and daylight sensors to ensure that the area is not over illuminated.
- 2.6 Stock post and rail fencing currently encloses the site apart from the northern boundary, where it would be added as part of this proposal in order to enclose the car park. The proposal can be seen in the block plan **attached (Appendix 3)**.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 Below is a summary of the responses received to the original plans and the amendments. A full copy of all the comments made can be viewed online at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

3.2 Parish Council	Objection. Access to the temporary carpark will encourage a proportion of users to use the bridleway which ends at the level crossing at Appleford. The Parish Council would wish to see a mechanism to prevent unauthorized access prior to permisison being granted.
Neighbours	<p>1 objection from an individual at 71 Brunstock Beck has been received. Concerns in summary are:</p> <p>There are already issues on the Ladygrove estate, with people parking during the day whilst commuting by train from Didcot Parkway. They will park on Cow Lane, Trent Avenue and other roads for free and walk 5 minutes to the station. Putting a 'park and ride' at Hill farm will only make these problems worse. There is also the increased traffic problem and what routes will the services take to get from Hill Farm to the station? Cow Lane is already congested without any additional bus traffic. Also this will impact on the A4130 traffic and the traffic coming into the landfill site. The other question is why do you need a multi-storey car park on the site? I have never seen this car park full after 20 years of living in this area. Another issue I have is that this has come from White Horse and Vale, but the impact will be on South Oxon residents, not the Vale. What do SODC have to say about the impact on the Ladygrove residents?</p>
Oxfordshire County Council One Voice- Transport	<p>No objection subject to conditions as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Access, Parking and Turning Space in Accordance with Specified Plan -Car Parking Prior to the use or occupation of the site, the car parking spaces shown on approved drawing number 8150589/6101 shall be constructed, surfaced and marked out. -Construction Traffic All construction traffic shall enter and exit the site only via the proposed access off the road serving Hill Farm. - No Drainage to Highway -Bicycle Parking Prior to the use or occupation of the temporary car park Drainage Details (Surface Water) Prior to the commencement of development

-Site signage Prior to the use or occupation of the temporary car park, details of a suitable off site signing strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

-Shuttle bus Prior to the use or occupation of the temporary car park, details of the shuttle bus workings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Transport Comment (in summary): This full application is for a temporary surface car park of circa 800 spaces for a period of up to 2 years, although it is only anticipated to be in operation for 1 year, with the remainder of the time for establishment and removal. It is required as a temporary provision whilst the existing Foxhall Road surface car park, serving Didcot Station, is reconstructed as an 1800 space capacity 5 deck multi storey car park. At present, the existing 890 space surface car park operates on average at 80% capacity, therefore the temporary provision of circa 800 spaces caters for the existing level of use together with any increase in usage as a consequence of rail service frequency improvements. It should be noted that the 2 existing additional surface car parks opposite the Station itself, which are not under the control of Network Rail, will continue to operate during the duration of the car park reconstruction. The proposed temporary car park is located to the northeast of the A4130/Collett Roundabout and accessed off the private road, serving Hill Farm, via a priority junction. The submitted documents indicate that there are adequate visibility splays available, 2.4m x 43m, and that the carriageway width available is sufficient to allow for 2-way working of all vehicles expected to utilise the site. It is recognised that the temporary car park site is remote to Didcot Railway Station and as such a shuttle bus has been proposed to transport users between sites. It is proposed for a slightly better than every 10 minute frequency during the site AM peak and then every ten minutes thereafter throughout the day, which is acceptable. However, this may be subject to slight variance once the contract for this service provision has been made. Due to the nature of the station car park in respect to the users, the site AM and PM peaks are not concurrent with the traditional network peaks. Furthermore, as this provision is a direct replacement for the existing Station car park, there is not anticipated to be an increase in traffic generation associated with the site, although there will be a redistribution of the traffic. Mindful of this point, it is required that a signing strategy be undertaken, that directs Station car park traffic along an appropriate route. The County would require the site to be accessed solely via the A4130 and not through the Southmead Industrial park, via Collett. The only exception is for those users who wish to gain access to Didcot Station if utilising cycles. This can be secured by way of condition.

-Drainage Prior to the commencement of development, a fully detailed scheme for the sustainable surface water drainage of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The surface water drainage scheme

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	shall be developed and implemented in accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment ref: ST8150589/CS/011
Archaeology	<p>No objection subject to conditions:</p> <p>1. Prior to any demolition and the commencement of the development a professional archaeological organisation acceptable to the Local Planning Authority shall prepare an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation, relating to the application site area, which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.</p> <p>2. Following the approval of the Written Scheme of Investigation referred to in condition 1, and prior to any demolition on the site and the commencement of the development (other than in accordance with the agreed Written Scheme of Investigation), a staged programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be carried out by the commissioned archaeological organisation in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation.)</p>
Landscape Officer(VOWH)	No Objection. The site is to the west of the railway and east of Didcot Power Station and the landfill site and located within the Lowland Vale. The application is for a temporary two year use. The proposed carpark would change the land cover of the field, but the main areas of vegetation between the site and the A4130 are retained and will provide some visual screening to the site.
Countryside Office(VOWH)r	No objection subject to the following condition:-I CONDITION: The development hereby permitted shall be implemented in accordance with the scheme of mitigation as stated in section 5 of the supporting Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey (Ecoconsult Ltd, July 2015) in all respects. Any variation shall be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority before such change is made. This condition will be discharged on receipt of a letter from the project ecologist providing evidence to demonstrate that the mitigation has been completed according to the method statement/approved report.
Environmental Protection (VOWH)	No objection
Drainage Engineer (VOWH)	<p>No objection. Recommends the following conditions:</p> <p>1) Prior to the commencement of development, a fully detailed scheme for the sustainable surface water drainage of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.</p> <p>2) The surface water drainage scheme shall be developed and implemented in accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment ref: ST8150589/CS/011 The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to any occupation or use of the development to which the scheme relates.</p>
Environment Agency	Advised decision should be made in accordance with NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance.
Thames Water	No objections. Recommend that petrol / oil interceptors be fitted in all car parking/washing/repair facilities. Failure to enforce the effective use of petrol / oil interceptors could result in oil-polluted discharges entering local watercourses

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P93/V1220](#) - Other Outcome (17/02/1994)

Development of a central arable crop storage and market facility to include storage silos, grain drying and handling equipment, ancillary office accommodation vehicle circulation and parking areas and landscaping.

[P84/V1494](#) - Approved (25/09/1984)

Diversion of existing overhead line in Appleford to facilitate construction of the North Peripheral Road, Didcot

[P82/V1353](#) - Other Outcome (09/08/1983)

Erection of an overhead line to supply Didcot North Junction. British Rail

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 **Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2011**

The development plan for this area comprises the adopted Vale of White Horse local plan 2011. The following local plan policies relevant to this application were ‘saved’ by direction on 1 July 2009.

Policy No.	Policy Title
DC1	Design
DC5	Access
DC6	Landscaping
DC8	The Provision of Infrastructure and Services
DC9	The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses
DC10	The Effect of Neighbouring or Previous Uses on New Development
DC12	Water quality and resources
DC14	Flood Risk and Water Run-off
HE9	Archaeology
NE9	Lowland Vale
NE10	Urban Fringes and Countryside Gaps

Emerging Local Plan 2031 – Part 1

5.2 The draft local plan part 1 is not currently adopted policy and this emerging policy and its supporting text has limited weight as per paragraph 216 of the NPPF. Greater regard is to be given to the NPPF in line with paragraph 14 and where relevant, the saved policies (listed above) within the existing local plan. At present it is officers' opinion that the emerging Local Plan housing policies carry limited weight for decision making.

The relevant policies are as follows:-

Policy No.	Policy Title
Core Policy 1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
Core Policy 7	Providing supporting infrastructure and services
Core Policy 37	Design and local distinctiveness
Core Policy 42	Flood risk

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Design Guide – March 2015

5.3

The following sections of the Design Guide are particularly relevant to this

application:-

- *Parking (DG44-50)*

Built Form

- *Scale, form, massing and position (DG51-54)*

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)- March 2012

5.4

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

5.5

Neighbourhood Plan

5.6

Paragraph 216 of the NPPF allows for weight to be given to relevant policies in emerging plans, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise, and only subject to the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent of unresolved objections and the degree of consistency of the relevant emerging policies with the NPPF.

5.7 To date a neighbourhood plan has not been submitted to the Council for Appleford. Consequently no weight can be given to any policies that may be emerging in any draft neighbourhood plan.

Environmental Impact

5.8 The proposal was screened for Environmental Impact Assessment, and the Council provided its screening opinion 4th August 2015, which was that Environmental Impact Assessment would not be required.

5.9 The development proposals have been assessed in relation to the selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 development as set out in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations 2011. Based on the information submitted, the Local Planning Authority is of the opinion that the submission of an Environmental Statement in connection with this development is not required.

5.10 The Local Planning Authority has taken into account the size and nature of the proposed development, the location of the potential development site and the likely impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, the potential increase in traffic, the potential effects on biodiversity, heritage assets, trees, hydrology (including flood risk), land contamination, noise and air quality, and the potential socio economic implications of the development on the local area.

5.11 This proposal site does not exceed 5ha and is not within a 'sensitive' locality. Consequently the proposal is beneath the thresholds set in Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 and this proposal is not EIA development and there is no requirement under the Regulations to provide a screening opinion.

Other Relevant Legislation

- 5.12
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990
 - Community & Infrastructure Levy Legislation Human Rights Act 1998
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Human Rights Act

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 have been taken into account in the processing of the application and the preparation of this report.

5.13

Equalities

In determining this planning application the Council has regard to its equalities obligations including its obligations under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

5.14

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The relevant planning considerations in the determination of this application are:

1. Principle of the development
2. Design, Layout and Landscaping
3. Residential/Neighbouring User Amenity
4. Flood Risk and Surface/Foul Drainage
5. Traffic, Parking and Highway Safety
6. Developer Contributions

6.2 The Principle of Development

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides that the local planning authority shall have regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. The development plan currently comprises the saved policies of Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF provides that due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.3 The site is within the countryside, within Lowland Vale designation (policy NE9 of the Local Plan) and is within an area designated within the Local Plan as urban fringe and countryside gap (policy NE10).

6.4 Policy NE9 of the Local Plan does not permit development if it would have an adverse effect on the landscape, particularly with long open views within or across the area. The application is for a temporary two year use. The proposed carpark would change the land cover of the field over this period, but the main areas of vegetation between the site and the A4130 are retained and will provide some visual screening to the site.

6.5 The top soil that has been excavated during construction will be formed into mounds along the northern boundary. This would enable the topsoil to be stored on site therefore reducing construction vehicle movements. The top soil will then be replaced on the field when the car park surfacing is removed at the end of the temporary planning permission. The top soil mound would also serve to screen the site from the north, and lessen the potential visual impact upon the Lowland Vale.

6.6 No objection is therefore forthcoming from the Landscape Officer, as given the temporary nature of the development, the screening that will be afforded and restoration to be agreed, the proposal would not have a significantly adverse impact (in the long term) on the landscape and as such the proposal is considered to be in accordance with policy NE9 of the Local Plan.

Policy NE10 of the Local Plan states that in urban fringes and important open gaps between settlements, development which would harm their essentially open or rural

6.7 character will not be permitted.

6.8 The development would harm the open character of the locality, so in this context there is some conflict with policy NE10. This has to be weighed however against the clear public benefit of the scheme and its temporary nature. There are three strands to sustainable development as outlined in para.7 of the NPPF- an economic role, a social role and an environmental role.

6.9 It is clear that the scheme supports a strategic economic role in that it is a temporary measure to allow redevelopment of the permanent parking facility for Didcot Parkway. The local economy relies heavily on good, sustainable transport links, and the new car park would support the role of the local rail system. The proposal similarly has a social role in supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, and by providing the required parking facilities for Didcot Parkway which would support local services, and easy access out of the District for employment and leisure, which reflects the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being. The proposal also has an environmental role in supporting infrastructure for the effective operation of the local rail network, which is considered to be sustainable mode of transport. The reduced need to travel by car alone reflects the intent of the NPPF in assisting to moving toward a low carbon economy.

6.10 The NPPF at para.9 states that pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including improving the conditions in which people live, work, *travel* and take leisure.

6.11 The NPPF at para.29 states that the transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel. Para.41 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should identify and protect, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice.

6.12 No other sites are apparent as being available and closer to Didcot Parkway which have presented a temporary solution for car parking. The proposal supports the infrastructure development of a sustainable transport mode (the rail system). The loss of open character of the site which would not be supported under policy NE10 is on balance however considered acceptable given the temporary nature of the development, as the land will be reinstated to agricultural use, and also given the wider strategic economic, social and environmental benefits of supporting infrastructure development of local rail services. The proposal in this respect is considered to be in accordance with the NPPF and is very much in the public interest. The principle of the development is therefore considered to be acceptable.

Design, Layout and Landscaping

6.13 The NPPF provides that planning decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment (paragraph 60). It gives considerable weight to good design and acknowledges it is a key component of sustainable development.

6.14 A number of local plan policies seek to ensure high quality developments and to protect the amenities of neighbouring properties (Policies DC1, DC6, and DC9). In March 2015 the council adopted its design guide, which aims to raise the standard of design across the district.

Given the type of use proposed, it is unlikely that the development would add value to the visual amenity and character of the locality as required under the above policies.

- 6.15 This must be weighed in the ‘Planning Balance’ however against the public benefits to be derived from the scheme, and the temporary nature of the carpark.

- No landscaping is proposed given the temporary nature of the development. The two year period sought for the temporary permission would not allow adequate time for meaningful landscaping to become established, and is not considered necessary given the temporary nature of the proposal. Existing planting to the north and east would assist in screening the proposal however as would the temporary earth mound to the north.
- 6.16

- Whilst the proposal would not be acceptable in terms of design, layout and landscaping on this site were it for a permanent type of development, the public benefit to be derived in supporting the development of infrastructure for the rail network, which is a sustainable transport mode, and the longer economic, social and environmental benefits to be accrued in the public interest are considered to significantly outweigh the short term impact on the character of the locality from shortcomings in design and landscaping given the temporary nature of the proposal.
- 6.17

Residential/Neighbouring User Amenity

- Adopted local plan policy DC9 seeks to prevent development that would result in a loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight for neighbouring properties or that would cause dominance or visual intrusion for neighbouring properties and the wider environment. Protecting amenity is a core principle of the NPPF. Design principles DG63-64 of the Design Guide pertain to amenity, privacy and overlooking.
- 6.18

- The closest residential properties to the site 150 metres to the South East at Tweed Drive on the southern side of the A1430 and south east of the Ladygrove bridge over the railway line. The carpark would not be visible from these properties given extensive planting to the north west of Tweed Drive, the rail line in between and planting to the periphery of the application site.
- 6.19

- Similarly tree and hedge planting on the southern side of the A1430 would mean that the carpark would not be visible from commercial properties on the Southmead Industrial Park. Given the mitigating distances, topography and existing landscaping around the site, the proposal would not impact upon the general amenity of residential and commercial neighbours and would therefore accord with policy DC9 of the Local Plan, and design principles DG63-64 of the Design Guide SPD.
- 6.20

Flood Risk and Surface/Foul Drainage

- The NPPF provides that development should not increase flood risk elsewhere and should be appropriately flood resilient and resistant (paragraph 103). It states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other things, preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution (Paragraph 109).
- 6.21

- Adopted local plan policy DC9 provides that new development will not be permitted if it would unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties or the wider environment in terms of, amongst other things, pollution and contamination. Policy DC12 provides that development will not be permitted if it would adversely affect the quality of water resources as a result of, amongst other things, waste water discharge. Policies DC13 and 14 are not considered to be consistent with the NPPF, because they do not comply with paragraphs 100 to 104 which require a sequential approach to locating development and provide that flood risk should not be increased elsewhere.
- 6.22

6.23 A Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken by Glanville in support of the application. The document includes an assessment of the existing level of flood risk to the site and its surroundings within the context of the development proposals and to assess the proposed surface water drainage strategy for the site once developed. The developable site is considered to be at low risk from all potential sources of flooding with the exception of groundwater flood risk. Provided that a porous car park construction is utilised, it is considered that the risk of groundwater flooding will not increase elsewhere and the low-medium risk will be suitably mitigated.

6.24 The site is located within Flood Zone 1, which the NPPF considers to be compatible with the proposed use of the site. Intrusive site investigations have confirmed that infiltration drainage techniques are appropriate to use on this site. It is therefore proposed to discharge surface water run-off generated from the proposed development to ground using infiltration techniques in line with national and local policy and guidance.

6.25 The proposed strategy will utilise sustainable drainage techniques and employ the use of porous gravel. The submitted FRA has demonstrated that the proposed development is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and local policies outlined above, as the site will not be at an unacceptable risk from flooding; will not increase flood risk elsewhere; and will employ a surface water drainage strategy based on the principles of sustainable drainage.

6.26 Subject to standard conditions that the development be carried out in accordance with the drainage strategy and FRA, and that oil interceptors are provided on site where necessary (given the potential for motor oil to enter into groundwater), no objections are forthcoming from the Drainage Engineer (VOWH) or Thames Water.

Traffic, Parking and Highway Safety

6.27 Adopted local plan policy DC5 requires safe access for developments and that the road network can accommodate the traffic arising from the development safely. The NPPF (Paragraph 32) requires plans and decision to take account of whether:-

- the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure;
- safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and
- improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development.

Paragraph 32 goes on to state: *“Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.”*

6.28 A Transport Assessment undertaken by Glanville has been submitted in support of the application.

6.29 The application is for a temporary surface car park for a period of up to 2 years, although it is only anticipated to be in operation for 1 year, with the remainder of the time for establishment and removal. It is required as a temporary provision whilst the existing Foxhall Road surface car park, serving Didcot Station, is reconstructed as an 1800 space capacity 5 deck multi storey car park.

6.30 At present, the existing 890 space surface car park operates on average at 80% capacity, therefore the temporary provision of circa 800 spaces caters for the existing level of use together with any increase in usage as a consequence of rail service

frequency improvements. It should be noted that the 2 existing additional surface car parks opposite the Station itself, which are not under the control of First Great Western, will continue to operate during the duration of the car park reconstruction. The proposed temporary car park is located to the northeast of the A4130/Collett Roundabout and accessed off the private road, serving Hill Farm, via a priority junction.

6.31 The submitted documents indicate that there are adequate visibility splays available, 2.4m x 43m, and that the carriageway width available is sufficient to allow for 2-way working of all vehicles expected to utilise the site. It is recognised that the temporary car park site is remote to Didcot Railway Station and as such a shuttle bus has been proposed to transport users between sites. It is proposed that the bus operate on a 10 minute frequency . However, this may be subject to slight variance once the contract for this service provision has been made. As this provision is a direct replacement for the existing Station car park, there is not anticipated to be an increase in traffic generation associated with the site, although there will be a redistribution of the traffic. Mindful of this point, it is required that a signing strategy be undertaken, that directs Station car park traffic along an appropriate route. The County have required the site to be accessed solely via the A4130 and not through the Southmead Industrial park, via Collett. The only exception is for those users who wish to gain access to Didcot Station if utilising cycles.

6.32 Whilst a condition can be applied to require directional signage to the temporary car park in consultation with County Highways in order to encourage a preferred route to the site, it is not considered possible to apply a restrictive condition which would limit access solely from the A4130 and not from Collet, given that Collet is a public highway, and given the difficulties of controlling individuals accessing the temporary carpark to access from the A4130 only.

6.33 Parking for 42 cycles would be provided on site, and as such the application promotes alternative and sustainable methods of transport to the carpark, which is further reinforced by the use of the shuttle bus to the train station, another sustainable mode of transport.

6.34 Given that the development is of a temporary nature only, and as no additional parking demand or transport movement is generated (movements are merely displaced during the construction of the permanent car park), then the application has raised no objection from Highways OCC. The application is therefore considered to be in general accordance with policy DC5 of the Local Plan and paragraph 32 of the NPPF.

Developer Contributions

The NPPF advises that planning obligations should only be sought where they meet all of the following tests (paragraph 204):

- 6.35
- i) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - ii) Directly related to the development; and
 - iii) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- Policy DC8 of the Adopted Local Plan provides that development will only be permitted where the necessary physical infrastructure and service requirements to support the development can be secured.

6.36 There are no planning obligations necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms in this instance.

Conclusions and Planning Balance

The temporary car park as proposed is essential to provide parking during construction

7.0 of a new multi-storey car park for Didcot Parkway, which in turn is a major investment
7.1 providing significant customer, environmental and economic benefit to the area and is very much in the public interest.

No objection is forthcoming from the Landscape Officer, as given the temporary nature of the development, the screening that will be afforded and restoration to be agreed,
7.2 the proposal would not have a significantly adverse impact (in the long term) on the landscape and as such the proposal is considered to be in accordance with policy NE9 of the Local Plan.

Policy NE10 of the Local Plan states that in urban fringes and important open gaps between settlements, development which would harm their essentially open or rural character will not be permitted. The development would harm the open character of the locality, so in this context there is some conflict with policy NE10. This has to be weighed however against the clear public benefit of the scheme and its temporary nature.
7.3

No other sites are apparent as being available and closer to Didcot Parkway which have presented a temporary solution for car parking. The proposal supports the infrastructure development of a sustainable transport mode (the rail system). The loss of open character of the site which would not be supported under policy NE10 is on balance however considered acceptable given the temporary nature of the development, as the land will be reinstated to agricultural use, and also given the wider strategic economic, social and environmental benefits of supporting infrastructure development of local rail services. The proposal in this respect is considered to be in accordance with the NPPF and is very much in the public interest. The principle of the development is therefore considered to be acceptable.
7.4

The proposal is considered to be acceptable with regards to issues considered above including general design and layout, landscaping, residential and neighbouring user amenity, flood risk/ drainage and traffic/highway safety.
7.5

The proposal is considered to be in general accordance with national planning policy given that it would comply with the '3 threads' within the NPPF which define sustainable development. The temporary car park would allow the construction of the permanent car park and support general infrastructure at Dicot Parkway. Strong transport links clearly have an *economic role* – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy. They also provides a *social role* – supporting a strong, vibrant and healthy community providing access beyond the district not only for work but also leisure that reflects the community's needs. The proposal would not have any significant impact upon the *environmental role* of sustainable development as it would not significantly impact upon the natural, built environment, or biodiversity.
7.6

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **It is recommended that authority to grant planning permission is delegated to the head of planning, subject to the following conditions:**

1. **Time limit.**
2. **In accordance with approved plans.**
3. **Temporary use – two year permission.**
4. **Reinstatement of site to agricultural use, removal of all surfacing and associated infrastructure within 12 months of the expiry of the permitted parking use.**
5. **Shuttle bus schedule/timetable and routing to be agreed prior to commencement of use.**
6. **Details of lighting to be provided/agreed in writing prior to**

commencement.

7. All construction traffic shall enter the site via the proposed access at Hill Top Farm only.
8. Access, parking and turning to be in accordance with approved plans.
9. Bicycle parking to be provided prior to commencement of use.
10. An offsite directional signage strategy shall be submitted, to be agreed in writing with the local planning authority and implemented in accordance with details agreed.
11. Surface water drainage details to be submitted/agreed prior to commencement.
12. No drainage to highway.
13. Petrol/oil interceptors to be fitted in car park – details to be submitted.
14. Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) to be submitted.
15. Following WSI (condition 12) a staged programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be carried out.
16. Development shall be carried out in accordance with habitat survey submitted.

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