

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	P16/V3123/FUL
<b>SITE</b>	Public Toilets, Abbey Meadow, Abbey Close Abingdon, OX14 3JT
<b>PARISH</b>	Abingdon
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	The proposal is to demolish the existing public toilet building and replace it with a new public toilet block which will provide: two accessible toilets, two unisex toilets, one accessible baby changing room, four urinals and the necessary service zone. The proposal also includes a new access route to the splash pad area of the park and fencing to enclose the splash pad.
<b>WARD MEMBERS</b>	Katie Finch Helen Pighills
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Vale of White Horse District Council (Ruth Cross)
<b>OFFICER</b>	Sarah Green

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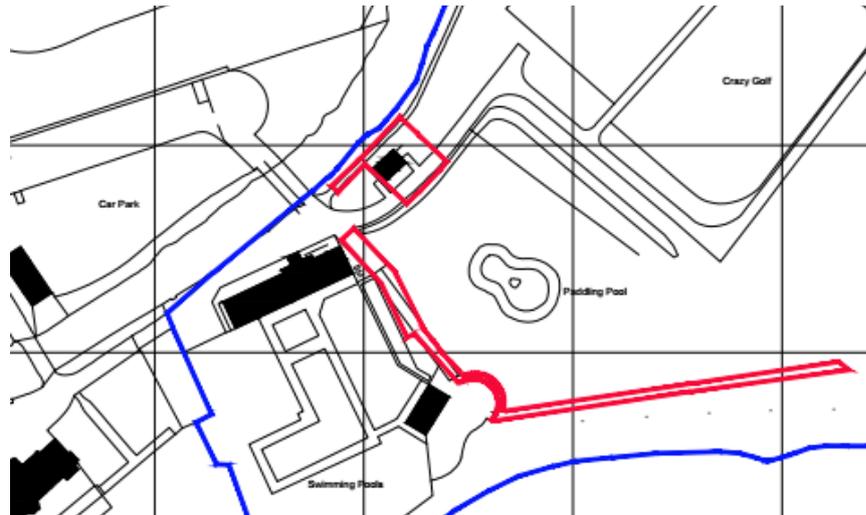
## **RECOMMENDATION**

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

- 1. Commencement three years - full planning permission.**
- 2. Approved plans.**
- 3. Tree protection.**
- 4. Materials in accordance with application.**
- 5. Drainage and flooding details – flood resilient construction, flood plan, drainage details.**
- 6. Development carried out in accordance with recommendations in site investigation report.**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL**

- 1.1** This application is referred to planning committee as the council is the applicant and objections have been received to the proposal.
- 1.2** The site includes the public toilets at Abbey Meadow and also the access route into the splash pad area as shown on the map below. The area lies within the flood zones 2 and 3a.



- 1.3 The proposal is for a replacement toilet block and changing facility for users of Abbey Meadow. It also includes re-grading the access into the splash pad area and additional fencing around the splash pad. The works are part of the overall improvement works to the Abbey Meadows. Extracts of the plans are **attached** at Appendix 1.

2.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

2.1 Abingdon Town Council	No objection. Would like consideration given to green roof, water butts and an outside tap
Local Residents and Groups	4 letters of objection and 4 letters of observation have been submitted. The grounds for objection are:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access path will make splash pad area smaller and spoil the park – there is no need for the path</li> <li>• Parents won't be able to sit on the slope</li> <li>• Toilets as designed may become place for unwelcome activities</li> <li>• More fencing spoils the meadow</li> <li>• Fencing is unnecessary and contrary to the council's desing policies</li> <li>• Misses opportunity to address shortage of female toilets</li> <li>• Rain water harvesting should be considered</li> <li>• Would like to see shrubs and flowers around the toilets</li> </ul>
Environment Agency	No objection
Drainage Engineer	No objection subject to conditions on flood resilient construction, flood plan and drainage
Forestry Team	No objection subject to condition on tree protection

Equalities Officer	Support
Health & Housing - Contaminated Land	No objection subject to condition
Countryside Officer	No objection
Conservation Officer	No objection subject to condition on external materials

### 3.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

#### 3.1 P16/V2821/FUL – Approved (03/01/2017)

To remove the tennis courts, attendants hut and the crazy golf course and to expand the children's play area into the entire area to include provision for children of all ages. (As amended by the site investigation reports received 24 November and amended design statement received 6 December.)

#### 3.2 **Pre-application History**

[P16/V2844/PEM](#) - Other Outcome (01/12/2016)

Replacement public toilet block.

Officers' comments can be summarised as follows – the principle is acceptable subject to addressing issues such as flood risk, impact on trees and bats

### 4.0 **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

#### 4.1 The development is not of a scale that is identified as potential EIA development.

### 5.0 **MAIN ISSUES**

#### 5.1 The relevant planning considerations are the following:

##### 5.2 Design and character

The new toilet building would be approximately 9.2m x 4.3m in dimension, including the roof overhang it would be approximately 11.5m x 6.75m. It would be approximately 3.8m in height. It would have an obscure-glazed clear-storey to help bring light into the building. The walls would be an off-white render, similar to the existing pool building, with metal public art panels to help screen the doors. The overall design of the building is considered to be acceptable. The internal layout is designed to enable sanitary fittings and bins to be maintained via the service zone. The new building would meet current regulations for cubicle sizes and access.

#### 5.3 The current slope into the splash pad area is too steep for safety and has a metal grid at the bottom. The re-grading of this path will ensure the slope complies with the current British Standard for access routes and is suitable for access by those with impaired mobility. The council's equalities officer is supportive of the changes as they will advance equality of opportunity and provide a more accessible play area. The new fencing around the splash pad will match that already within the park.

- 5.4 A number of comments have been raised by third parties about opportunities for a green roof and questioning the need for additional fencing around the splash pad. The applicant has stated that a green roof and rainwater harvesting was considered but the additional cost for a supporting roof structure and system was outside of the scope of the budget. The public consultation in 2015 for the Abbey Meadows highlighted a number of comments mentioning the need for fencing between the splash pad and the river to keep young children safe. The applicant considers the proposed fence to be an additional enhancement to the overall scheme. A circular walk around the edge of the area will still be possible. The fencing will match the existing metal railings which allow for views across the park to be maintained. With regard to an outside tap the applicants are currently looking at alternative locations within the park area.
- 5.5 Trees  
The application is accompanied by a tree survey. There are a number of trees in the vicinity of the works but none within the footprint of the proposed construction. Although the replacement toilet building is slightly further away from a Hornbeam to the west, and will not affect an Ash to the east, a tree protection plan will be necessary to ensure that the long term health of these trees remains unaffected during the course of the works. The forestry officer is satisfied that a tree protection plan and details of the protective fencing can be required by conditioned.
- 5.6 Contaminated land  
The proposed development lies within the vicinity of a former landfill from which there is the potential for gas migration. Therefore as a precautionary measure the contaminated land officer has recommended that the development is carried out in line with the recommendations set out in the site investigation report. This will ensure the development is safe.
- 5.7 Flood risk  
The site lies within flood zones 2 and 3a. A flood risk assessment has been provided and reviewed by the drainage engineer and the Environment Agency.
- 5.8 The use is one that is compatible with a location flood zone 2 and 3a under national guidance. The Environment Agency consider that, taking into account the location of the site within the floodplain, the existing depths of flooding and the relatively small displacement, the works are relatively low risk and therefore have no objection. Similarly the drainage engineer considers there will be no appreciable increase in flood risk. He has requested details of flood resilient construction measures and a flood action plan, which can be controlled by condition.
- 5.9 Other  
The countryside officer is satisfied that there is only a low risk of impacts on protected species. He recommends an informative on any permission to draw the applicants attention to their legal requirements should any bats be discovered.

- 5.10 The conservation area boundary is on the opposite side of the Abbey Stream and extends down to include Cosener's House. Abbey Gardens is also a scheduled monument and there are a number of listed buildings along Abbey Close. The site is considered to be within the setting of the Abbey Gardens and the conservation area. Given the proposal is to replace an existing toilet block with one of a better design and visual appearance, it is considered that the proposal will enhance the site and wider area, and the setting of the heritage assets.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The proposal is considered an acceptable design and appearance and subject to the conditions, would not lead to an increase in flood risk. It would therefore accord with the relevant development plan policies.

The following planning policies, planning guidance and other legislation have been taken into account:

### **Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1** policies -

- CP31 - Development to Support the Visitor Economy
- CP37 - Design and Local Distinctiveness
- CP39 - The Historic Environment
- CP42 - Flood Risk
- CP44 - Landscape

### **Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011** policies -

- DC5 - Access
- DC6 - Landscaping
- HE1 – Conservation area
- HE4 – Setting of listed building

### **National Planning Policy Framework, 2012**

### **Planning Policy Guidance, 2014**

### **Vale of White Horse Design Guide, 2015**

### **Equalities Act 2010**

The application has been assessed in accordance with section 149 of the Equalities Act, the public sector equality duty, and it is considered that no identified groups will suffer a disadvantage as a result of the proposal.

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