

ITEM NO: 8Application No.
17/00126/COND

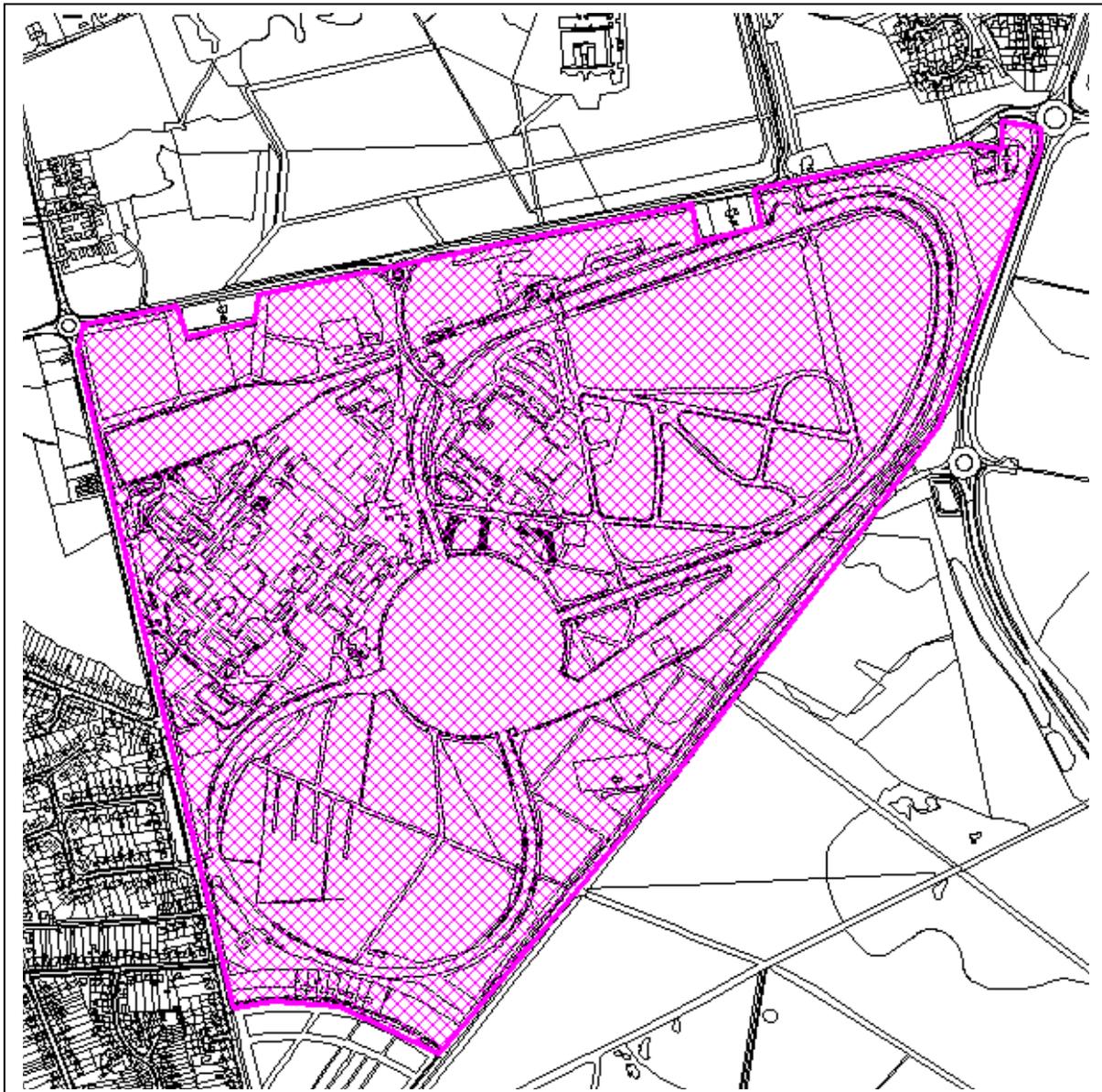
Site Address:

Ward:
CrowthorneDate Registered:
22 June 2017Target Decision Date:
17 August 2017**Land At Former TRL Site Nine Mile Ride Crowthorne
Berkshire RG40 3GA**Proposal: **Details pursuant to condition 11 (tree survey) of planning permission 13/00575/OUT.**

Applicant: Legal and General Homes Communities (Crowthorne) Ltd

Agent: Quod

Case Officer: Trevor Yerworth, 01344 352000

development.control@bracknell-forest.gov.uk**Site Location Plan** (for identification purposes only, not to scale)

OFFICER REPORT

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This application seeks approval of details submitted pursuant to condition 11 (tree retention/ removal) of outline planning permission 13/00575/OUT in respect of an area in the north west corner of the former TRL site. The proposal is for the removal of trees to facilitate the laying of a new foul drain required for the redevelopment of the former TRL site.

1.2 The proposed route of the foul drain would be less disruptive to the root zones of the existing (predominantly Oak trees) on the edge of the road than the alternative option of laying the drain within the public highway of Old Wokingham Road. It would also reduce the extent and duration of works within the highway, reducing the potential disruption to local traffic. It is considered that these are sound reasons for the removal of the proposed trees to facilitate the foul drain and approval is therefore recommended.

RECOMMENDATION
Planning permission be granted subject to conditions in Section 11 of this report

2. REASON FOR REPORTING APPLICATION TO COMMITTEE

2.1 The application is reported to the Planning Committee as more than five objections have been received.

3. PLANNING STATUS AND SITE DESCRIPTION

PLANNING STATUS
Within Defined Settlement (extended settlement boundary)
Identified for major mixed use development in SALP (Policy SA5)

3.1 The application site is part of the former Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) which has planning permission for the comprehensive redevelopment of the site (see Section 4 below). It was previously included within the Site Allocations Local Plan which was formally adopted in July 2013. Specifically, the site for the proposed tree removal is located within the area of woodland in the north western corner of the site, located close to the roundabout junction between Old Wokingham Road and Nine Mile Ride.

4. RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

4.1 Relevant site history can be summarised as follows:

Application 13/00575/OUT - Outline application (including details of access from Nine Mile Ride and Old Wokingham Road) for the comprehensive redevelopment of the former Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), comprising demolition of existing buildings (excluding the new TRL headquarters building), the erection of up to 1000 dwellings, neighbourhood centre (comprising use classes A1, A2 and A3), retail unit (A1 / A2 / A3), primary school and associated playing fields, community centre, care home, and municipal depot, together with public open space, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), surface water attenuation areas, landscaping, formation of public highways, vehicular access and parking – APPROVED 13.01.2015

Application 17/00355/REM - Submission of details of scale, layout, appearance, access and landscaping relating to the infrastructure phase pursuant to outline planning permission 13/00575/OUT – Pending Consideration at the time of writing the report.

Application 17/00401/REM - Submission of details of scale, layout, appearance, access and landscaping relating to the Phase 1 residential phase, comprising 207 dwellings, pursuant to outline planning permission 13/00575/OUT – report elsewhere on this agenda.

5. THE PROPOSAL

5.1 Details have been submitted pursuant to condition 11 (tree retention/ removal) of planning permission 13/00575/OUT). Condition 11 states: "No Phase or Sub Phase of the development shall be begun until the following details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:-

- a) a comprehensive land (topographical) survey in accordance with Section 4 of British Standard 5837:2012 'Trees In Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction, Recommendations' (or any subsequent revision), identifying the positions of all existing trees over 75mm diameter at 1.5m (unless in woodland when over 150mm diameter) to be retained (including their crown spreads) together with any retained hedgerows or shrubbery on the land to be retained in that phase;
- b) Details of any proposed topping or lopping of any retained tree, or of any tree on land adjacent to the site which overhangs the site; and
- c) Details of any proposed alterations in existing ground levels, and of the position of any proposed excavation, within the crown spread of any retained tree or of any tree on land adjacent to the site

In this condition "retained tree" means an existing tree which is to be retained in accordance with the survey referred to in paragraph (a) above.

If any retained tree is removed, uprooted, destroyed or dies within 5 years of the completion of a Phase or Sub Phase, another tree shall be planted at the same location and the replacement tree shall be of such size and species (and shall be planted at such time) as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In order to safeguard the vegetation that is considered to be worthy of retention in the interests of the visual amenities of the area.

5.2 The submitted tree removal plan indicates existing trees which it is proposed to remove to facilitate the laying of a new foul drainage run which is required for the development of the former TRL site, in accordance with the outline planning permission.

6. REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

Crowthorne Parish Council

6.1 comments awaited.

Other representations

6.2 18 letters of objection have been received in respect of the proposals. The reasons for objection can be summarised as follows:

- loss of even more trees along the Old Wokingham Road in order to put in drainage will erode the boundary between the new buildings and the road. On such a large site surely it would be possible to find space within the site, thus keeping to the wording and ideals of the Design and Access statement.

- Old Wokingham Road is currently a leafy road and further loss of trees will change the character of the street scene and the continuity of the forest landscape between the two settlements.
- The reference to a possible cycle path is quite spurious as the foundations for a cycle path would be much less deep than for a main drain, and will therefore cause far less disturbance to tree roots.
- BFC requested that Bewley retained a 40 metre tree boundary on the development on the opposite side of the Old Wokingham Road to act as a screen to the new development. It would appear to be applying double standards if BFC now agree to further loss of trees on their side of the road and don't give similar consideration to this development.
- Good idea not to dig up Old Wokingham Road - this might protect the very flaky SSE Water main from further bursts.
- Very concerned with what is left of the "separation" between Wokingham, Crowthorne and Bracknell - would appear to be just a few oak trees on OWR (NW of the site.)
- Appreciate that the trees need to be removed for the cycle path, but no details are provided of planting, soft landscaping etc. which would go some way to re-assuring residents that developer is not hellbent on total tree destruction.
- Would also point out that BFC refused permission for a cycle path on the West side of OWR (Bewley Homes site) on the grounds that this would be detrimental to the character of the area. Respectfully suggest same objection - detrimental to landscape character - applies here.

7. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Parks and Countryside Officer

Supports proposal based on the conditions on site, the reduction in traffic management and disruption required in the highway, the scale of comparable tree removal elsewhere on the site and the opportunity to create a landscaped corridor for the foot/cyclepath already proposed in this area. Retention of broadleaved roadside trees is critical, and this proposal would create space for some new broadleaved tree planting.

As a foot/cyclepath is proposed in the same area it makes sense to construct the path on the foul sewer easement, set within a newly landscaped strip. There would be sufficient width here for the path to meander and the cleared edge to the pine plantation could be scalloped. Plantation trees are quite well spaced here, so the effect of removing the outer 2 or 3 lines of trees on the overall appearance will be less than in other more densely planted plantations on the site – both in terms of the visual appearance of the tree crowns and the risk of wind-blow.

8. MAIN POLICIES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS RELEVANT TO THE DECISION

8.1 The key policies and associated guidance applying to the site are:

	Development Plan	NPPF
General policies	CP1 of SALP, CS1 & CS2 of CSDPD	consistent
Design	CS7 of CSDPD, Saved policies EN1 and EN20 of BFBLP.	consistent
Other publications	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).	

9. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 The key issue for consideration is the impact on the character and appearance of the area.

9.2 This application proposes the removal of a line of trees to facilitate the laying of a new foul drainage run required for the redevelopment of the former TRL site. It was previously intended to lay the drain within the public highway of Old Wokingham Road. However, the applicant's landscape consultant considered that the route which is now proposed would be less disruptive to the root zones of the existing trees on the edge of the road which are predominantly oak. It would also reduce the extent and duration of works within the highway, reducing the potential disruption to local traffic.

9.3 The proposed alignment sits within an existing gap in the trees on the inside of the old TRL security fence. A number of existing trees (predominantly semi/mature Scots Pine) would be removed to allow the excavation of the drain run. The route will require an easement to secure future maintenance access to an area of approximately 3 metres wide on either side of the drain (effectively an area with no existing tree trunks or tree planting of around 6.5m). This coincides with the route and dimensions of the strategic cycleway that is already proposed in this area of the site so it would not act as a further constraint on the landscape proposals that will come forward in a future reserved matters application for this area.

9.4 The proposals have been discussed on site with the Council's Parks and Countryside Officer and the precise alignment of the easement land has been adjusted in response to his comments. The trees that are affected by the proposal have been located on site and, the root protection areas (RPAs) have been established in accordance with BS5837. The corresponding RPAs for the oak trees existing outside of the fence line have been assessed as 4.8 - 5.5m. As the line varies with the trees along the length of the boundary, it is considered that a 4m off-set from the fence would be a reasonable average line for the oaks' RPAs.

9.5 There is a single oak tree on the southern corner of the drainage run which is shown to be removed. As the work progresses the applicant will explore the scope to retain this tree if possible, although this will be determined by the extent of root growth and the essential future earthworks.

9.6 While the concerns of the objectors in respect of the loss of further trees is noted, the provision of a foul drain is part of the essential infrastructure to enable this important housing development to be delivered. It is considered that the proposed route has a number of advantages over the alternative of running it along the public highway. Firstly it is considered that it would reduce the impact on the existing predominantly Oak trees on the road frontage which form the most immediate roadside tree cover and are considered to be of greater importance in the street scene and overall character of the area than those further into the site proposed for removal.

9.7 The small number of trees affected are part of a pine plantation within the Former TRL site boundary which as with much of the other tree cover on the TRL site was planted essentially as a timber crop. These plantations need management to improve their amenity and biodiversity value, and long term condition. The proposals tie in directly with this positive management approach.

9.8 A second major benefit of the proposed routing would be a reduction in the impact on users of Old Wokingham Road by shortening the period of major roadworks and corresponding inconvenience for the road users and local residents.

9.9 Thirdly as the proposed foul sewer route would coincide with a foot/cyclepath is proposed in the same area, it makes sense to construct the path on the foul sewer easement, set within a newly landscaped strip. There would be sufficient width here for the path to meander and the cleared edge to the pine plantation could be scalloped to make this an attractive route. Plantation trees are quite well spaced here, so the effect of removing the outer 2 or 3 lines of trees on the overall appearance will be less than in other more densely planted plantations on the site, both in terms of the visual appearance of the tree crowns and the risk of wind-blow.

9.10 It is therefore not considered that the proposal would result in an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area. The development would therefore not be contrary to CSDPD Policy CS7, or BFBLP 'Saved' Policies EN1 or EN20 or the NPPF.

10. CONCLUSIONS

9.11 It is considered that the proposed route of the foul drain would have a number of significant advantages over the alternative route of running it along the public road, including a reduction in the period of major roadworks on Old Wokingham Road and the corresponding disruption this would involve, and the opportunity to create a landscaped corridor for the foot/cyclepath already proposed in this area. Retention of the broadleaved roadside trees is critical, and this proposal would create space for some new broadleaved tree planting.

9.12 As such the proposal would not be contrary to CSDPD Policies CS7, BFBLP 'Saved' Policies EN1 or EN20 or the NPPF.

11. RECOMMENDATION

11. The submitted details in respect of condition 11 of application 13/00525/OUT are APPROVED.