



Appeal Decision

Inquiry Held on 3-6 & 10-12 March 2026

Site visits made on 4 & 9 March 2026

by G D Jones BSc(Hons) DipTP DMS MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26th May 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/25/3375485

Land north of Whitchurch Station, West of Newbury Road

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Genko Holdings Ltd against the decision of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 23/03157/FUL, dated 20 December 2023, was refused by notice dated 1 August 2025.
 - The development proposed is described as construction of a surface car park; landscape buffer planting and screening; SUDS; erection of single cafe unit (class E); fast-charging EV points; cycle parking facilities; creation of vehicular access pedestrian footpath to station platform.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the construction of a surface car park, landscape buffer planting and screening, SuDS, erection of single cafe unit (class E), fast-charging EV points, cycle parking facilities, vehicular access and pedestrian footpath to station platform at Land north of Whitchurch Station, West of Newbury Road in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 23/03157/FUL, dated 20 December 2023, subject to the conditions contained within the Schedule at the end of this decision.

Applications for Costs

2. Applications for costs were made by:
 - Genko Holdings Ltd against Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council; and
 - Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council against Genko Holdings Ltd.
3. These costs applications shall be the subject of a separate Decision letter to follow. Although the appellant made no further application, it also invited me to make an award of costs against Whitchurch Town Council and Whitchurch Action Group (WTCAG) on my own initiative. I shall also deal with this matter in the Costs Decision letter to follow.

Preliminary Matters

4. The appellant has requested that the appeal be assessed and determined based on proposal drawings that differ from those that were before the Council when it determined the appeal planning application. The Council raised no objections to

this approach and made its case on the basis of the revised details. The changes relate to repositioning of car parking spaces by less than 1m; landscaping alterations, including additional planting; variations to the surrounding context; a modification to the site access to allow a bus to exit in an emergency; and detail of the drainage and lighting schemes.

5. In my view, the amendments are, at the most, minor and would not result in any substantial difference or fundamental change to the application as determined. Moreover, due to their minor nature, nor would there be any procedural unfairness caused to anyone involved in the appeal were it to be determined on the basis of the revised details. I have, therefore, assessed and determined the appeal based on the revisions requested by the appellant.
6. A legal agreement, dated 23 March 2026, made under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (the Legal Agreement) was completed shortly after the Inquiry closed. I have had regard to it when considering and determining the appeal.

Main Issues

7. The main issues are:
 - Whether the proposed development would accord with Policy SS11 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011-2029;
 - Whether it amounts to major development in the terms of paragraph 190 of the National Planning Policy Framework;
 - The proposed development's effect on trees, including those subject to Tree Preservation Order;
 - Its overall effect on the North Wessex Downs National Landscape; and
 - Whether any harm that might result from the development would be outweighed by other considerations.

Reasons

Local Plan Policy SS11

8. Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2011 to 2029), May 2016, (the Local Plan) allocates a 1ha site, on land to the north of the railway line at Whitchurch, for development of a new passenger railway station car park. Local Plan Policy SS11 says, amongst other things, that proposals for a new rail station car park at this site will be permitted subject to three criteria being met.
9. The appeal site broadly contains the 1ha Policy SS11 site (the allocated site) but also includes additional land, particularly to the south linking to the northern platform of Whitchurch Station (the Station). Landscaping is also proposed beyond the boundaries of both the appeal site and the allocated site, particularly to the north and west. The proposed car park, which is intended for use by rail passengers, would, nonetheless, be contained within the allocated site. In that respect, the proposals accord with Policy SS11.
10. The first criterion of Policy SS11 is that vehicle access to the site can be secured from Newbury Road. Part of the allocated site extends to Newbury Road. It is in this location that the vehicular access to the car park is proposed. The access would necessitate the removal of trees, which is a matter considered as part of the

third main issue below under the sub-heading *Trees*. Nonetheless, there is no substantiated evidence that the proposed access cannot be safely created and operated. Moreover, the local highway authority has not objected to the proposed access. Furthermore, the Council has confirmed that it no longer sustains its objections in respect to this first criterion.

11. The second criterion is that access between the railway station and car park site can be secured. The allocated site does not have a contiguous boundary with the Station. Consequently, other than using a rather indirect route via the existing highway network, part of which does not have a footway, compliance with this aspect of the Policy would require a link between the car park and the Station across the intervening land, beyond the allocated site. This is what is proposed.
12. This access link would be accommodated within that part of the appeal site that extends to the south of the allocated site. Notwithstanding some of the submissions made, there is no substantiated evidence that this proposed access cannot be delivered. Indeed it seems most likely that it can be. As with the first criterion of Policy SS1, the Council has confirmed it no longer sustains its objections in respect to the second criterion.
13. The third and final criterion of the Policy is that the site is comprehensively landscaped given its location within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, now known as the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (the National Landscape). The on-site planting proposed would be supplemented by off-site planting, particularly to the north and west of the allocated site. Collectively and subject to controls that could be secured via planning conditions, the proposed planting would be substantial. Accordingly, the site would be comprehensively landscaped albeit that much of the planting would lie beyond the allocated site and the appeal site. The effect of this aspect of the scheme along with any wider effects is considered as part of the fourth main issue below under the sub-heading *North Wessex Downs National Landscape*.
14. Other aspects of the proposals have been criticised as being at odds with Policy SS11, particularly in terms of going beyond what was envisaged when the Local Plan was adopted. These include the amount of car parking spaces and hardstanding proposed, the consequential effect on land available on-site for landscaping, as well as in respect to proposed lighting and sustainable drainage systems (the SuDS).
15. I recognise that if less parking and hardstanding were to be proposed, there would be more space available on-site for landscaping. Nonetheless, Policy SS11 does not place an upper limit on the number of parking spaces that may be provided nor on the extent of hardstanding. Consequently, there is no conflict with the Policy as a matter of principle in these respects.
16. While not expressly provided for in the Policy, the proposed lighting and SuDS would be ancillary to the car park. Lighting and drainage infrastructure are reasonably standard features that one would expect to form part of a car park intended to support a railway station. The same is true of the proposed electric vehicle charging points and cycle parking facilities, which also do not expressly feature in the Policy. Accordingly, as a matter of principle, none of these considerations are in conflict with Policy SS11.

17. The proposed café unit contrasts somewhat with the foregoing aspects of the appeal scheme as this kind of facility is less clearly associated with a station car park use. Nonetheless, it would support the proposed development, in terms of providing a service to users of the car park and Station and is described by the appellant as having been *brought about by the need to support EV charging*. While such a café is not expressly included within the Policy SS11 allocation, nor is it precluded.
18. Overall, therefore, the appeal scheme would not conflict with Policy SS11 of the Local Plan. Nonetheless, it does not necessarily follow from this that the development would not cause any harm or conflict with other planning policy. These matters are considered below.

Framework Paragraph 190

19. Paragraph 190 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires that when considering applications for development within National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. The associated footnote 67 sets out that whether a proposal is 'major development' for the purposes of paragraph 190 is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.
20. The planning witnesses for the Council and for WTCAG respectively indicated that a scheme that complies with Local Plan Policy SS11 would not amount to major development in the terms of Framework paragraph 190. I have found no good reason to disagree with them in this regard. While these witnesses came to a different conclusion to me in respect to compliance with Policy SS11, as set out above I have found that the appeal scheme would accord with this Policy. On this basis, the appeal scheme would not amount to major development in the terms of Framework paragraph 190.
21. The appeal site is some 1.18ha in area. While landscaping is proposed beyond its boundary, it would be predominantly in the form of planting rather than development. The additional land within the appeal site that extends beyond the 1ha allocated site is chiefly to accommodate the proposed link to the Station. As set out above, such a link is a requirement of Policy SS11 yet not something that can be delivered without relying on land beyond the allocated site.
22. Although the significant majority of the appeal site would be developed and lit, the totality of the proposed development is of a reasonably small scale, including only one building which would be of modest proportions. Nor would it have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the National Landscape has been designated or defined.
23. For these reasons, irrespective of my conclusion regarding compliance with Policy SS11, the appeal scheme does not come close to meeting the description of 'major development' for the purposes of paragraph 190 of the Framework. Nor does it conflict with this paragraph 190. In making this assessment I have taken into account the submissions regarding EIA screening. Nonetheless, the tests associated with paragraph 190 and EIA screening are entirely separate, with different purposes, and one should not be used to inform the other.

Trees

24. The creation of the proposed vehicular access would result in the loss of three trees located adjacent to Newbury Road. These trees are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order made subsequent to the adoption of the Local Plan. The extent of the allocated site's frontage to Newbury Road places a constraint on where a vehicular access, as required by Policy SS11, could be located. It is here that the proposed access would be located. The Arboricultural Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) between the Council and the appellant says *this is the only place the access can go. Any other, more arboriculturally suitable location is not possible for other highways or landscape reasons.*
25. It is implicit, therefore, that the Policy SS11 allocation anticipated the loss of these trees as well as any effects on other trees to be retained in order to create the vehicular access required by the Policy. Accordingly, the proposed development would bring about no greater harm through its impact on these trees than the Local Plan Policy SS11 allocation. Moreover, the Arboricultural SoCG also concludes that the amenity value of the trees to be removed can be compensated by replacement planting, which could be secured via planning conditions.
26. For these reasons, therefore, the proposed development would not have a significant effect on trees, including those that are subject to the Tree Preservation Order. Accordingly, in this regard, the appeal scheme would comply with Policy EM1 (Landscape) of the Local Plan and Policy LD3 (Protection of Hedgerows, Trees and Tree Planting) of the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Development Plan 2014 to 2029, July 2017 (the Neighbourhood Plan), as well as with paragraph 187 of the Framework.

North Wessex Downs National Landscape

27. When assessing the proposed development's effect on the National Landscape, I have taken into account that, via Policy SS11, the Local Plan anticipates a new passenger railway station car park at the 1ha allocated site and that that site is contained broadly within the appeal site.
28. Implicit within the Policy SS11 allocation is that a new passenger railway station car park would be acceptable at the allocated site in terms of its effect on the National Landscape subject to the site being comprehensively landscaped. If all of the landscaping were to be contained within the allocated site, it would have an influence on the amount of space that would be available for the car park and associated development, including drainage infrastructure and lighting, particularly around the edges of the allocated site. Limiting the quantum of development and increasing the amount of landscaping on-site in this manner might be said to be positive in terms of the effect on the National Landscape.
29. However, a more rounded appraisal of the appeal scheme indicates that it would have an acceptable effect on the National Landscape, broadly in line with the appellant's landscape witness's assessment. Fundamental to this is how the proposed off-site planting would be seen and experienced in the host landscape.
30. The proposed landscaping scheme relies on some 1ha of land that lies beyond the appeal site. While this approach may not be ideal, provided that the mitigation, be it on or off-site, would be secured, it would be acceptable in principle. The some 20m-deep belt of tree planting proposed to the north of the appeal site would be

very much in keeping with the local landscape character. Notable existing examples are found nearby, to the west along the former railway corridor and to the south along the existing railway corridor. Comparable long and deep tree belts are also present in the wider landscape, particularly to the northwest. Moreover, native woodland is a key characteristic of the National Landscape and a benefit of the scheme.

31. Although the proposed tree belt would foreshorten the host field, any Policy SS11 compliant scheme would have a foreshortening effect. To the north of the tree belt, the scale and proportions of the field that would remain would be in keeping with the wider landscape. An important aspect of the effectiveness of the proposed tree belt as a characteristic landscape feature is that it would extend the full width of the field. This could not be achieved were planting to be constrained to the allocated site.
32. Indeed, limiting the landscaping to within the allocated site would be likely to be less in keeping with the local landscape than what is proposed. There are two principal reasons for this. First, while it would provide a greater sense of openness, planting constrained to a corner of a large field is less characteristic of the area's landscape than the proposed tree belt. Second, the boundary of the allocated site has a series of rather awkward angles and corners that are even less characteristic of the local landscape.
33. Part of the landscaping scheme includes meadow, which is not characteristic of the wider landscape. Nonetheless, it is characteristic of the edge of Whitchurch where there are areas of grassland and scrub such that it would not be out of keeping here or harmful to the National Landscape.
34. The appeal site is reasonably prominent in terms of being fairly elevated and standing on the edge of the settlement with a frontage to Newbury Road. Nonetheless, its prominence and any sense of this area acting as a gateway to the National Landscape would have been known when Policy SS11 was adopted as part of the Local Plan.
35. Moreover, due in large part to the proposed planting, visual effects of the development would be localised and diminish over time as the planting matures. By 'year 15', the proposed development would be screened from views to the north. It also seems likely that there would be some betterment in terms of providing additional screening of existing lighting within the settlement, including that associated with the Station.
36. Views of the development from the west would be more open, particularly while the proposed planting established. The Landscape and Visual Appraisal's assessment that after Year 15 the adverse visual effects on receptors using the rights of way to the west would be no more than moderate appears reasonable. Since this Appraisal was produced the scheme has evolved and now includes more sympathetic mitigation. Consequently, these visual effects are likely to have reduced, at least a little. Nonetheless, the adverse effects in this respect would result in conflict with Policy EM1 of the Local Plan.
37. The car park would be apparent from Newbury Road, particularly due to the vehicular access, both in terms of heralding its presence and affording views in to the site that are currently screened or filtered by boundary planting, including the three trees that are proposed to be removed. Nonetheless, given that Policy SS11

requires a vehicular access to Newbury Road, the landscape and visual effects of the development along this frontage would be likely to be similar for any Policy SS11 compliant scheme.

38. Limiting the landscaping associated with a Policy SS11 car park development to within the allocated site would also have implications in respect to visual effects. This is because there is very little scope to position the vehicular access other than near to the northern boundary. Consequently, there would be limited opportunity to sympathetically screen the development along part of the northern boundary. The proposed scheme represents a significant improvement by comparison.
39. Due principally to the screening effect of the proposed planting, the proposed drainage scheme would not have a significant influence on the character and appearance of the area beyond that of the wider proposed development. For similar reasons, combined with its small scale and simple design, the same would be true of the proposed café building.
40. The Council's case is that the appeal scheme would breach the statutory duty in s85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the Statutory Duty) to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape. Its planning witness accepted, nonetheless, that a proposal in accordance with Policy SS11 would be compatible with the Statutory Duty. Again, I have found no good reason to disagree with her in this regard.
41. In summary, while there would be some adverse landscape and visual effects and associated conflict with Local Plan Policy EM1 resulting from the appeal scheme, these should be viewed in the context of the Local Plan Policy SS11 allocation. Any Policy SS11 compliant scheme would have some landscape and visual impacts. The appeal scheme accords with Policy SS11. Its landscape and visual effects would be localised and any harm would be no more than moderate in the longer term. There would be significant countervailing landscape and visual benefits, such that landscape and scenic beauty in the National Landscape would be conserved and enhanced.
42. Accordingly, the appeal scheme would have an acceptable effect on the National Landscape and would be compatible with the Statutory Duty. Moreover, for reasons outlined above, it would not conflict with Policy EM10 (Delivering High Quality Development) of the Local Plan and Policy LD2 (Protection of Biodiversity and Landscape) of the Neighbourhood Plan, nor with paragraph 189 of the Framework, the North Wessex Downs Management Plan or the Council's Design and Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document, July 2018.

Further Considerations

Other Matters

43. Notwithstanding some of the submissions, the evidence indicates that the purpose of the Evingar Road car park was at least partly to relieve on-street parking rather than replace or provide an alternative to the planned Policy SS11 car park. Policy SS11 was adopted in light of the Evingar Road proposal. I also note that the Neighbourhood Plan expressly supports the Local Plan policy for the development of a station car park north of the railway station - the Policy SS11 allocated site.

44. The appeal scheme has been criticised in terms of safety and accessibility to the Station. However, notwithstanding planned and funded improvements along the intervening route, the Evingar Road car park appears likely to perform worse or no better in these respects than the appeal scheme. This is largely due to its distance from the Station and the intervening topography and quality of lighting. Nor would it provide step-free access to the northern platform in contrast to the appeal scheme. I am mindful, though, that the appeal scheme would not resolve existing issues associated with moving directly between the two platforms.
45. There is no substantiated evidence that the proposed lighting would fail to create a safe, secure and attractive environment for users of the development. In addition to these factors, the lighting scheme must also respond to the site's sensitive location within the National Landscape, together with relevant biodiversity considerations. These are matters that would apply to any Policy SS11 compliant development. There is no compelling reason to conclude that the appeal scheme would not achieve an appropriate balance between these requirements or provide a safe, secure environment for its users.
46. Need for the appeal car park or any Policy SS11 compliant car park has also been challenged. Nonetheless, the evidence of the appellant's highways witness indicates that there is need, current and future, for extra station car parking broadly consistent with the quantum proposed. Although critical of that evidence, the Council produced no evidence of its own on this matter.
47. While WTCAG did produce evidence regarding need, it is not as comprehensive or as compelling as that of the appellant, particularly in terms of likely future need. For instance, while 64% of its users may currently walk to the Station, it does not follow that there is no latent rail-user demand to access the Station, for example, from people who live beyond reasonable walking distance from it. Although aspects of the network constrain the number of services that can operate through the Station, this need not place a constraint on future demand. I was advised that, given the length of the platforms and consistent with past activity, rail passenger capacity could be increased via longer trains.
48. Network Rail supports the provision of the car park, which also suggests that there is a need for the proposed scheme. For these reasons and bearing in mind that the development plan plans for car parks at both the Policy SS11 allocated site and the Evingar Road site, there is good reason to believe that there is a need for the proposed car parking.
49. The evidence also refers to other appeal decisions. Those in other areas would have been the subject of different development plan policies compared to those before me. Moreover, I am not familiar with the full circumstances of any of those cases. While I am mindful of the importance of consistency in appeal decision making, it is also important that each decision is made on its individual merits. So, although I have taken all of the other appeal decisions into account, I have assessed and determined this appeal on the basis of the evidence before me in the relevant policy context. Having done so, none have altered the outcome of the appeal.

Interested Parties

50. In addition to the main issues and the other foregoing matters, concern has been expressed, including by those who spoke at the Inquiry, in respect to a number of

considerations. These include the proposals' effect on rights of way; on archaeology; highway safety and congestion, including for pedestrians and access for emergency vehicles; on water quality; on biodiversity; on safety and security; on mental health; on the rural economy; on drainage and flood risk; on existing infrastructure; on criminal activity and antisocial behaviour; on access and recreational use of the countryside; and on heritage assets.

51. The concerns raised also relate to whether there is a genuine need for all elements of the proposed development; community engagement over the proposals; wider proposals for the area; landscape-wide archaeology; land ownership; infrastructure to support the development; alleged shortcomings in the assessment of the development, including the environmental impact assessment and in a wide range of other respects; bus services/facilities; accessibility by means other than the car, including between the car park and Station, and within the Station; connectivity to the settlement; the lack of station improvements; pollution, including noise, light, water, air and odour; the EV charging points; climate change; train passenger capacity; the appellant's conduct and motives; whether the café could/should be located in the settlement; and ground conditions and contamination.
52. The objections also concern whether there would be any public benefits resulting and if so whether they are overstated; changed circumstances since the Local Plan was adopted; overdevelopment of Whitchurch; sustainability; layout and design; compliance with the development plan, including the Neighbourhood Plan; loss of farmland; compliance with Whitchurch Design Statement, the North Wessex Downs Management Plan and National Nature Network Framework; parking for people with disabilities; liaison with Network Rail and use of its land; whether exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated; dark skies; the creation of a precedent for other development; the site's location beyond the settlement boundary; signage; the scheme's deliverability; procedural matters; the emerging Local Plan; the site's history; consultation and publicity of the proposals; and viability of the café.
53. These matters are largely identified and considered within the Council officer's report on the appeal scheme such that they were before the Council when the planning application was determined. They were also before it when it prepared its evidence and when it submitted its case at the Inquiry and are largely addressed in its evidence and in the various SoCGs. Other than as set out above, the Council did not conclude that they would amount to reasons to justify withholding planning permission. I have been provided with no substantiated evidence which would prompt me to disagree with the Council's conclusions in these respects subject to the imposition of planning obligations and conditions as discussed below.

Planning Obligations

54. In the event that planning permission were to be granted and implemented, the planning obligations within the Legal Agreement would secure:
 - A Landscape Management Plan, its implementation and its maintenance; and
 - On and off-site biodiversity measures, including a Biodiversity Gain Report, Biodiversity Gain Land, Biodiversity Metric and Habitat Management and Monitoring, and long-term management, as well as a payment to support monitoring.
55. The Council has submitted a detailed statement (the CIL Compliance Statement), which addresses the application of statutory requirements to the planning

obligations within the Legal Agreement and sets out the relevant planning policy support / justification.

56. I have considered the planning obligations of the Legal Agreement in light of Regulation 122 of The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) and government policy and guidance on the use of planning obligations. Having done so, I am satisfied that those obligations would be required by and accord with the policies set out in the CIL Compliance Statement. Overall, I am satisfied that all of those obligations are directly related to the proposed development, fairly and reasonably related to it and necessary to make it acceptable in planning terms.

Conditions

57. A schedule of 24 suggested conditions agreed between the Council and the appellant has been submitted, which includes the standard time limit condition. I have considered these in the light of government guidance on the use of planning conditions and made adjustments accordingly.
58. In order to provide certainty, a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans would be necessary. To protect highway safety and the living conditions of local residents and in the interests of biodiversity, conditions would be necessary to control matters during the construction phase, including dust and air quality, and compliance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan.
59. Conditions to safeguard against contamination that might affect the site, including unsuspected contamination, along with any requisite remediation, and to control soil and other material imported to the site, would be necessary to protect the health and well-being of future occupiers and on/off-site receptors as well as in the interests of biodiversity. Also in the interests of biodiversity, conditions would be necessary to mitigate the development's effects on protected species and their habitat.
60. Further conditions would be necessary to ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined / recorded. To protect the character and appearance of the area and in the interests of biodiversity, conditions would be necessary to protect retained trees and ensure the establishment of new tree planting, to secure a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan, and to control levels, earthworks and lighting.
61. Conditions to secure the installation and management of sustainable drainage would be necessary in the interests of flood prevention, to provide appropriate and adequate facilities, and to protect the environment. To ensure safe, practical and inclusive pedestrian facilities are provided, to protect the character and appearance of the area and in the interests of biodiversity, a condition to secure the delivery of an accessible link between the site and the Station's northern platform would be necessary.
62. A condition would be necessary to secure and control cooking fume extraction measures associated with the café to protect the living conditions of nearby occupiers. To help ensure the efficient operation of the car park and that it serves users of the Station appropriately, a condition would be necessary to secure a Car Park Management Plan along with its implementation.

63. To promote the use of sustainable modes of transport and to protect the character and appearance of the area, a condition to control the provision of on-site electric vehicle charging facilities would be necessary. To protect the living conditions of neighbours, a condition to control noise and vibration from equipment within the site would be necessary. To protect highway safety and manage traffic flow, a condition would be necessary to secure and retain the vehicular access point and associated visibility splays.

Planning Balance

64. The appeal scheme accords with Local Plan Policy SS11. It would not be 'major development' in the terms of Framework paragraph 190.
65. There would be some adverse effects leading to some conflict with Local Plan Policy EM1. These, though, should be understood in the context of the Policy SS11 allocation. Any Policy SS11 compliant scheme would have some landscape and visual impacts. The appeal scheme's effects would be localised and any harm would be no more than moderate in the longer term. It would have no significant effects on trees and accord with Framework paragraph 187.
66. There would also be benefits in landscape and visual terms compared to the approach favoured by the Council resulting from the creation of a tree belt rather than relying purely on on-site landscaping.
67. Overall, the scheme would have an acceptable effect on the National Landscape and be compatible with the Statutory Duty. Moreover, for the reasons outlined above, the scheme would accord with the development plan viewed as a whole and comply with paragraph 189 of the Framework.
68. Although I have not done so, had I concluded that the appeal scheme were to represent 'major development', in my view the public interest in such a scheme and exceptional circumstances were already proven when the site was allocated in the Local Plan. Furthermore, there are significant public interest considerations associated with the delivery of the appeal scheme, which in the context of the Policy SS11 allocation and wider considerations outlined above, would amount to exceptional circumstances in the terms of Framework paragraph 190.
69. Again, although I have not done so, had I concluded that the proposed development were to be in conflict with Policy SS11, I would not have concluded that there would be a breach of the Statutory Duty bearing in mind that Policy SS11 allocates car park development on a 1ha site. As the appellant points out, it would be an overextension to claim that one form of disposition of typical car parking elements within the allocated site breaches the Statutory Duty while another may not.
70. Moreover, the appeal scheme meets the Statutory Duty in many ways, including by supporting the use of the rail network as a sustainable mode of transport, and via biodiversity improvements and native tree planting. It would bring substantial benefits. Notable amongst these are the support that the car park would bring to rail travel as a sustainable mode of transport, the biodiversity net gain and the native planting. There are also the landscape and visual benefits relative to the Council's favoured approach. Although the benefits of the scheme are not as numerous and weighty as the appellant claims, they would comfortably outweigh

the residual harm that I have identified and the policy conflict alleged by the Council, including in respect to Policy SS11.

71. For these reasons, therefore, the appeal scheme is undoubtedly sustainable development in the terms of the Framework and should be granted planning permission.

Conclusion

72. For all of the reasons given above and, subject to the identified conditions, the appeal should be allowed.

G D Jones

INSPECTOR

APPEARANCES¹

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

Ruchi Parekh, Counsel

Instructed by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

She called

Frank Spooner BSc(Hons)
RCArborA MArborA TechCert
(ArborA) VETCert (Consulting)
Anne Priscott BA(Hons) CMLI
Stephanie Baker BSc(Hons)
MSc MRTPI

Operations Director & Senior Consultant,
Simon Jones Associates

Anne Priscott Associates Ltd
Associate, Bell Cornwell

FOR THE APPELLANT:

Sasha White², King's Counsel

Instructed by Bidwells

He called

Thomas Eckhardt Dipl Geol
CGeol
Peter Wharton BSc(Hons)
FArborA MICFor
Ian Dix BSc(Hons) MSc CMILT
MCIHT
Clare Brockhurst FLI
BSc(Hons) Dip LA
Christopher Pattison
BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

Technical Director & Hydrogeologist, WSP UK

Director, Wharton Natural Infrastructure
Consultants

Director, Transport Planning & Mobility SLR
Consulting Limited

Director, Leyton Place Limited

Head of Planning, Bidwells LLP

FOR WHITCHURCH TOWN COUNCIL AND WHITCHURCH ACTION GROUP:

Jane Piper

Instructed by Whitchurch Town Council &
Whitchurch Action Group

She called

David Williams BA(Hons)
Dip(Hons) LA CMLI
Jane Piper BA(Hons) BTP
MRTPI

Principal, David Williams Landscape
Consultancy Ltd

Director, Lucid Planning

INTERESTED PERSONS:

Jacqueline Browne
David Gosling

Local Resident & Whitchurch Action Group
Local Resident & Whitchurch Action Group

¹ Brian O'Donovan, Principal Planning Officer of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, and Billy Palmer, Partner, Planning, Bidwells, contributed to the conditions / planning obligations session

² Mr White was assisted by Poppy Kemp, Counsel

DOCUMENTS submitted at the Inquiry

- ID1 - The Appellant's Opening
- ID2 - Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's Opening
- ID3 - Whitchurch Town Council & Whitchurch Action Group's Opening
- ID4 - Jacqueline Browne's script
- ID5 - David Gosling's script
- ID6 - Lead Local Flood Authority Comments dated 15 January 2026
- ID7 - Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's Closing Statement
- ID8 - Whitchurch Town Council & Whitchurch Action Group's Closing Statement
- ID9 - The Appellant's Closing Statement

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS FOR APPEAL REF APP/H1705/W/25/3375485:

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - Site location plan Dwg 1277.01 - 001 Rev B
 - Existing site plan Dwg 1277.01 - 010 Rev F
 - Proposed site plan Dwg 1277.01 - 101 Rev I
 - Proposed café ground floor plan Dwg 1277.01 - 102 Rev A
 - Proposed café roof plan Dwg 1277.01 - 103 Rev A
 - Proposed café elevation Dwg 1277.01 - 200 Rev B
 - Site Access Arrangement Dwg ITB16002-GA-027 Rev C
 - Landscape Proposals Dwg CLPD 243 P01
 - Station Car Park Existing Topography (Sheet 1 of 2) Dwg 9857-WSP-CP-XX-C-DR-0101 Rev P01
 - Station Car Park Existing Topography (Sheet 2 of 2) Dwg 9857-WSP-CP-XX-C-DR-0102 Rev P01
 - Station Car Park Proposed Drainage Strategy (Sheet 1 of 2) Dwg 9857-WSP-CP-XX-C-DR-0501 Rev P02
 - Station Car Park Proposed Drainage Strategy (Sheet 2 of 2) Dwg 9857-WSP-CP-XX-C-DR-0502 Rev P02
 - Station Car Park Drainage Catchment Plan (Sheet 1 of 2) Dwg 9857- WSP-CP-XX-C-DR-0510 Rev P01
 - Station Car Park Drainage Catchment Plan (Sheet 2 of 2) Dwg 9857-WSP-CP-XC-DR-0511 Rev P01
 - External Lighting Layout Dwg 1553-WEL-XX-XX-DR-E-7000 Rev C03
 - LV Services Layout Dwg 1553-WEL-XX-XX-DR-E-7001 Rev C03
- 3) No development shall commence on site (including site preparation, any groundworks and any off-site works) until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The approved CEMP shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The CEMP shall include, but not be limited to:
 - Procedures for maintaining good public relations including complaint management;
 - Public consultation and liaison;
 - Arrangements for liaison with the Council's Environmental Protection Team;
 - All works and ancillary operations which are audible at the site boundary, or at such other place as may be approved by the LPA, shall be carried out only between the following hours: 0730 Hours and 1800 Hours on Mondays to Fridays and 0800 and 1300 Hours on Saturdays and; at no time on Sundays and Public Holidays;
 - Deliveries and removal of plant, equipment, machinery and waste shall only take place within the permitted hours detailed above;

- Mitigation measures as defined in BS 5528: Parts 1 and 2: 2009 Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites shall be used to minimise noise disturbance from construction works;
- Procedures for emergency deviation of the approved working hours;
- An undertaking to require all contractors to be 'Considerate Contractors' by being aware of the needs of neighbours and the environment;
- Control measures for dust, dirt and other air-borne pollutants;
- Measures for controlling the use of lighting whether required for safe working or for security purposes;
- Means of direct access (temporary or permanent) to the site from the adjoining maintainable public highway;
- The parking and turning of vehicles of operatives and visitors off-carriageway, timeframes of delivery to be provided;
- The loading and unloading of plant and materials away from the maintainable public highway, where appropriate;
- Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development away from the maintainable public highway;
- The erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate;
- A scheme for recycling and disposing of waste resulting from construction work; and the management and coordination of deliveries of plant and materials and the disposing of waste resulting from construction activities so as to avoid undue interference with the operation of the public highway, particularly during the peak periods (i.e. Monday to Friday AM peak (07.30 to 09.30) and PM peak (16.00 to 18.00) periods);
- The routes to be used by construction traffic to access and egress the site so as to avoid undue interference with the safety and operation of the public highway and adjacent roads, including construction traffic holding areas both on and off the site as necessary;
- Method of cleaning wheels and chassis of all HGV's, plant and delivery vehicles leaving the site;
- Means of keeping the site access road and adjacent public highway clear of mud and debris during site demolition, excavation, preparation and construction. No vehicles shall leave the site in a condition whereby mud, clay or other deleterious materials would be deposited on the public highway; and
- Implications for and management of Whitchurch Public Footpaths 248/7/1 and 248/504/1 during construction.

The CEMP shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and shall be installed and operational before any development commences and retained in working order throughout the duration of the development.

- 4) No works shall commence until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (LPA):
 - (a) A site investigation report documenting the ground conditions of the site and incorporating chemical and gas analysis identified as being appropriate by the desk study in accordance with BS10175:2011- Investigation of

Potentially Contaminated Sites - Code of Practice; and, unless otherwise approved in writing by the LPA,

- (b) A detailed scheme for remedial works and measures to be undertaken to avoid risk from contaminants or gases when the site is developed. The scheme shall include a timetable of works and site management procedures and the nomination of a competent person to oversee the implementation of the works. The scheme shall ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and if necessary, proposals for future maintenance and monitoring.

Unless part (a) identifies significant contamination, it may transpire that part (a) is sufficient to satisfy this condition, meaning part (b) need not be subsequently carried out. This would need to be approved in writing by the LPA.

If during any works contamination is encountered which has not been previously identified by these reports it shall be reported immediately to the LPA. The additional contamination shall be fully assessed and an appropriate remediation scheme, approved in writing by the LPA.

- 5) No development shall take place until a mitigation method statement relating to dormice that evidences how and when works are to take place and the specific measures that shall be put in place to retain dormice populations in “favourable conservation status” in line with protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Amended) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall be delivered in accordance with the approved mitigation method statement.
- 6) No development shall take place until a programme of archaeological evaluation, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once approved, a programme of archaeological mitigation of impact shall be completed in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation.
- 7) No development, including land clearance, demolition, groundworks or the delivery of materials, shall commence until an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The AMS shall accord with BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations and shall include, but not be limited to:
 - a) Details of all tree-works operations, including timing and methodology;
 - b) Measures for the protection of all retained trees and hedgerows;
 - c) A schedule of works to be undertaken prior to commencement of development;
 - d) A programme of arboricultural supervision and monitoring;
 - e) Detailed working methods for all operations within the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of retained trees;
 - f) Existing and proposed levels, including full details of earthworks (cut and fill), supported by cross-sectional drawings;
 - g) Construction methodologies for hard surfacing, access construction and any special engineering solutions within RPAs;
 - h) Details and locations of underground and above-ground services;

- i) Details of soil amelioration and decompaction within the RPAs of trees impacted by the works;
- j) The siting of site compounds, storage areas, mixing areas and contractor parking; and
- k) A schedule of post-construction monitoring and management measures.

The development shall thereafter be carried out in full accordance with the approved AMS.

- 8) Prior to commencement of development, a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) setting out the long-term management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all hard and soft landscaping features. Soft landscape details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and tree establishment), schedules of planting noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, as well as any works to enhance wildlife habitats where appropriate. In addition, implementation timetables and maintenance programmes detailing all operations to be carried out to allow successful establishment of soft landscaping, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA before development commences. Once approved, the landscaping shall be carried out and thereafter maintained in accordance with the details so approved.
- 9) No development shall take place until details of any earthworks, including cross-sections and full topographical details demonstrating levels and contours, and details of working within the root protection areas of retained trees detailed within an Arboricultural Method Statement as per Condition 7 have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. For context, cross-sections and topographical information shall include reference to immediately adjacent topography.
- 10) No development shall take place until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall include:
 - a) A technical summary highlighting any changes to the design from that within the approved Flood Risk Assessment;
 - b) Detailed drainage plans to include type, layout and dimensions of drainage features including references to link to the drainage calculations;
 - c) Detailed drainage calculations to demonstrate existing runoff rates are not exceeded and there is sufficient attenuation for storm events up to and including 1:100 + climate change;
 - d) Confirmation that sufficient water quality measures have been included to satisfy the methodology in the Ciria SuDS Manual C753; and
 - e) Exceedance plans demonstrating the flow paths and areas of ponding in the event of blockages or storms exceeding design criteria.

Once approved, the scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

- 11) Prior to commencement of development, details of the accessible link between

the site and the northern platform at Whitchurch Station shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include specifications for the design of the accessible entrance to ensure suitability for wheelchair users and confirmation that there are appropriate landowner permissions for the works to allow implementation. The footpath and accessible entrance shall be made available for public use prior to first operation of the car park and thereafter retained for that purpose. The details shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

- 12) Prior to the erection of the café building, a scheme containing full details of arrangements for internal air extraction, odour control, and discharge to atmosphere from cooking operations, including any external ducting and flues, and necessary noise control measures determined in accordance with the Control of Odour and Noise from Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Systems (EMAQ 2018) document, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works detailed in the approved scheme shall be installed in their entirety before the use hereby permitted is commenced.

The equipment shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and operated at all times when cooking is being carried out unless otherwise approved beforehand in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

- 13) Notwithstanding the annotations and table on External Lighting Layout Dwg 1553-WEL-XX-XX-DR-E-7000 Rev C03, prior to installation of the lighting scheme, a written scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority that specifies the provisions to be made for the level of illumination of the accessible footpath link within the railway embankment between the car park and northern platform. The level of illumination in this area shall be no more than 0.2 lux on the horizontal plane and 0.4 lux on the vertical plane above the baseline within this area of the site.

The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the operation of the car park and maintained for the lifetime of the approved development and shall not be altered without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

- 14) Details for the long-term maintenance arrangements for the surface water drainage system shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the first use of the car park. The submitted details shall include maintenance schedules for each drainage feature type and confirmation of ownership. Once approved, the scheme shall be carried out and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

- 15) No development above ground level shall take place until a Tree Planting and Establishment Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The Plan shall include:
- a) The location, species, specification and size of all proposed tree planting;
 - b) Details and cross-sectional drawings of tree planting pits, including soil specification, drainage, aeration and irrigation measures where applicable;
 - c) Details of tree support and protection measures;
 - d) A programme for implementation; and
 - e) A five-year establishment and maintenance schedule.

All tree planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan in the first planting season following completion of the development or such other timetable as approved in writing by the LPA.

Any tree planted pursuant to this condition which dies, is removed, becomes seriously damaged or diseased within five years of planting shall be replaced in the next planting season with a tree of the same species and specification, unless otherwise approved in writing by the LPA.

- 16) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied/brought into use until there has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) verification by the competent person approved under the provisions of Condition 4 that any remediation scheme required and approved under the provisions of Condition 4 has been implemented fully in accordance with the approved details (unless varied with the written approval of the LPA in advance of implementation). Unless otherwise approved in writing by the LPA such verification shall comprise:

- a) As built drawings of the implemented scheme;
- b) Photographs of the remediation works in progress; and
- c) Certificates demonstrating that imported and/or material left in situ is free of contamination.

Thereafter the scheme shall be monitored and maintained in accordance with the scheme approved under Condition 4, unless otherwise approved in writing by the LPA.

- 17) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied/brought into use until there has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority certificates demonstrating that a) sufficient sampling of imported material has taken place and b) the imported material is free from unacceptable levels of contamination. Sampling shall take place in situ at a frequency of 1 per 100m³.

- 18) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied/brought into use until a Car Park Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan shall include the following details:

- a) Details of car parking layout to include allocated areas;
- b) The proposed allocation and arrangement of parking spaces, including disabled blue badge bays;
- c) The provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points ;
- d) A delivery plan for the car park, café and lockers;
- e) Car parking charges;
- f) The management responsibilities together with contact details (name, address, telephone, email);
- g) Maintenance arrangements;
- h) Enforcement measures;
- i) Management details of all soft landscape components where these fall within the areas covered by the Plan;
- j) Management details of all hard landscape elements where these fall within the areas covered by the Plan;
- k) Maintenance operations for both hard and soft landscape components summarised in chart format stating the frequency and duration over the

lifetime of the Plan;

- l) Cleaning operations including graffiti and fly-tipping removal pressure washing re-painting;
- m) Failed component re-design and installation liabilities/responsibilities/timings; and
- n) A scheme of review of the Plan to ensure that it remains relevant to the parking requirements of Whitchurch Station. The scheme of review shall be undertaken at five yearly intervals and shall not be more than ten yearly intervals.

The car parking shall be provided and managed in accordance with the approved Plan thereafter, or as otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

- 19) Prior to first use of the electric vehicle car charging points, details of electric vehicle charging provision shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include the specification, appearance and siting of any charging points. Once approved, the scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 20) All recommendations outlined in the Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment report number 80769-SRL-RP-YA-002-S2-P1 shall be implemented and completed before the use, hereby approved, is first commenced and shall be thereafter retained and maintained, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- 21) Development shall be undertaken in accordance with the Ecology Report dated December 2023 and Addendum Ecology Report dated July 2025 by Applied Ecology including the recommendations made at Section 4.
- 22) Following completion of archaeological fieldwork, a report produced in accordance with an approved programme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority setting out and securing appropriate post-excavation assessment, specialist analysis and reports, publication and public engagement.
- 23) The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) under Condition 7 and shall be subject to supervision by a suitably qualified and experienced Arboricultural Clerk of Works (ACoW). The ACoW shall:
 - a) Attend a pre-commencement site meeting with the developer, principal contractor and Local Planning Authority (if required by the Local Planning Authority);
 - b) Oversee the installation of tree protection measures;
 - c) Supervise all operations within the Root Protection Areas of retained trees;
 - d) Monitor compliance with the approved AMS throughout construction;
 - e) Undertake a post-construction inspection and attend a project completion meeting; and
 - f) Submit written site supervision records to the Local Planning Authority of items a-c; at approved intervals as per the approved AMS for item d; and upon completion of development.

No works within the Root Protection Area of retained trees shall take place unless the ACoW is present and has confirmed that the methodology accords with the approved AMS.

- 24) No development shall take place until the access point and visibility splays as shown in Site Access Arrangement Dwg ITB16002-GA-027 Rev C have been laid out and constructed in accordance with the relevant details shown on that drawing. Thereafter they shall be retained for that purpose and kept clear of obstructions.