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<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	24/00749/FULLS
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION - SOUTH
<b>REGISTERED</b>	28.03.2024
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Mr David Pickett, Test Valley Borough Council
<b>SITE</b>	Test Valley Borough Council, Bourne House, Sandy Lane, SO51 0PD, <b>ROMSEY TOWN</b>
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Clearance of two areas of scrub land and construction of two parking areas, one for staff vehicles the other for service vehicles
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	
<b>CASE OFFICER</b>	Kate Levey

Background paper (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)

[Click here to view application](#)

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application is reported to Southern Area Planning Committee because the proposal has been submitted by the Council for development on its own land and the application is not considered to be minor development.

## 2.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 Bourne House is a Test Valley Borough Council depot. The building contains offices, kitchen area and toilets for use by Council staff. The yards to the east and south of the building are used to store maintenance and refuse collection vehicles. There is a staff car park to the north of the Bourne House building.
- 2.2 The site is located on the northern edge of Romsey. The site is irregular in shape with a long access drive to Sandy Lane, approximately 70 metres to the north. There is also an additional access to the west through Belbins Industrial Estate. On entering the site from the northern access point the site opens to the east where the current car park is laid out. Bourne House is sited centrally within the site and to the east is existing hardstanding. To the rear of the building the land falls suddenly to a lower yard.

## 3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This proposal is for the clearance of two areas of scrub land and construction of two parking areas to the east of the existing works yard. One of the proposed car parks (to the north) would be for staff car parking and the other (to the south) would be for service vehicles - existing grounds maintenance vehicles and small vans.
- 3.2 Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) are proposing to source new food waste collection vehicles in addition to the existing fleet. These new food waste collection vehicles would be stored on the lower level behind Bourne House.

Currently, the existing fleet of grounds maintenance vehicles and small vans park here. These vehicles would be moved to the proposed new parking area to the east of Bourne House.

#### 4.0 **RELEVANT HISTORY**

4.1 17/00798/TVBC3S Construction of 8 additional parking spaces converted from two sections of grass verge. Permission subject to conditions and notes 22.05.2017

4.2 12/01636/TVBC3S Extension of existing car park to provide 11 additional car parking spaces. Permission subject to conditions and notes 27.09.2012

4.3 11/00053/TVBC3S The provision of a new Council Depot for Test Valley Borough Council comprising: change of use Bourne House from Class B1 offices and light industrial to a Council Depot (sui generis), refurbishment and upgrade of the building, replacement of a rear section with a new structure, reorganisation of existing parking area and provision of additional parking, works to internal access arrangements. Permission subject to conditions and notes 03.02.2011

#### 5.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

5.1 Environmental Protection: no objection subject to conditions

5.2 Ecology: no objection subject to conditions

5.3 Trees: no objection

5.4 HCC Highways: no in principle objections, however, vehicle tracking for the car park and the truck park are required

Case Officer note: The parking spaces are to be provided on private land and away from any public highway network. As such, it is considered unreasonable and unnecessary to request tracking diagrams in this instance.

#### 6.0 **REPRESENTATIONS** Expired 26.04.2024

6.1 Romsey Town Council: objection

Loss of biodiversity in this green space. Concern about smells and noise affecting the residential neighbours and noise out of normal hours.

6.2 One letter of objection, summarised as follows:

- The area is already overdeveloped
- Staff arrive very early in the morning
- Loss of biodiversity
- There are unpleasant odours
- Concern about noise
- No respect for residents
- How many cars would use the parking area
- Concern about pollution and water run off
- Are any trees being taken down

6.3 One letter neither objecting to or supporting the application, summarised as follows:

- The Hampshire Ornithological Society note the extensive mitigation recommended in the BNG Assessment and Biodiversity Management Plan as required to safeguard biodiversity
- Mitigation and compensation measures are required to address impacts on Great Crested Newts, reptiles, the Abbotswood SINC and the Local Nature Reserve.
- A habitat management and monitoring plan detailing these mitigation measures should be provided before the Council approves this application

## 7.0 **POLICY**

### 7.1 Government Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)  
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

### 7.2 Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016)(TVBRLP)

Policy COM2: Settlement Hierarchy  
Policy LE10: Strategic Employment Sites  
Policy E1: High Quality Development in the Borough  
Policy E2: Protect, Conserve and Enhance the Landscape Character of the Borough  
Policy E5: Biodiversity  
Policy E8: Pollution  
Policy LHW4: Amenity  
Policy T1: Managing Movement  
Policy T2 and annex G: Parking standards

## 8.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1 The main planning considerations are:

- Principle of development
- Retention of employment use
- Character and appearance of the area
- Arboriculture
- Ecology
- Amenity and pollution
- Highways

### 8.2 **Principle of development**

The application site is located within the settlement boundary of Romsey. In accordance with Policy COM2 of the Revised Local Plan development is considered to be acceptable in principle provided that the proposal is in accordance with other relevant policy. The proposal is assessed against the relevant policies below.

### 8.3 **Retention of employment use**

The Bourne House site is part of the wider Belbins Business Park which is identified as a strategic employment site by annex E of the Local Plan. Policy LE10 seeks to retain land currently in use as employment and restrict alternative uses. This proposal is for an extension to an existing employment use and therefore accords with policy LE10.

### 8.4 **Character and appearance of the area**

Given the set back of Bourne House from Sandy Lane and the neighbouring properties to the north, public views of the proposal from Sandy Lane would be limited. The proposal will be visible from within the Area for Nature Conservation (ANC), also a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) to the south of the site. However, it will be read against the back drop of the industrial estate including larger buildings and Bourne House itself. The additional hardstanding for parking would have a functional appearance associated with the existing use of the site. It is considered that the impact on the character and appearance of the area would be neutral, and the proposal would accord with policy E1.

### 8.5 **Arboriculture**

There are trees in close proximity to the development which contribute positively to the amenity of the area. The supporting arboricultural information demonstrates that these trees would be retained, and the development wouldn't have any direct impact on the root protection areas of the retained trees. However, the proposal requires the removal of two sections of mixed overgrown hedge located along the eastern boundary of the existing works yard. The loss of this hedge is necessary to allow access into the proposed parking areas, and could be compensated for by replacement hedge planting along the perimeter of the proposed parking area.

8.6 The submitted tree constraints plan shows that the crown of T6 would overhang a small portion of the proposed parking area. However, this overhang is not excessive and whilst the crown of the tree would grow in the future it is not considered to conflict with the intended use of the land whereby there would be pressure to prune or fell this tree. Furthermore, it is noted that the crown of T5 already overhangs the existing car park to the north of the Bourne House building without any issues, problems or pressure to fell or excessively prune it.

8.7 The Arboricultural Officer has not objected to the proposal. A condition is recommended requiring the tree protection measures are implemented, as detailed in the MJC Services Ltd, Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Tree protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement, MJC-23-0177, to ensure that the retained trees are be suitably protected throughout the course of construction. Subject to this condition it is considered that the application accords with policy E2.

## 8.8 Ecology

- The two proposed parking areas are covered by grassland and scrub. Historical aerial photographs from 2000, 2005 and 2013 show that this land was scrub at the time the photographs were taken, but the 2013 photograph shows some disturbance by vehicle tracks.
- 8.9 The application is supported by an extended phase 1 ecological assessment and phase 2 surveys (Phillips Ecology, September 2023). The reptile survey revealed a good population of slow worm and a low population of common lizard. The proposed mitigation strategy of fencing, trapping and relocation, along with the enhancement of the surrounding habitat through the inclusion of hibernacula and logpiles is acceptable. The measures detailed in section 14 of the submitted ecological report are secured by condition of this recommendation.
- 8.10 Great Crested Newts are known to be present within the Abbotswood Local Nature Reserve SINC to the south of the site and within ponds in the area. The proposed development will see the removal of suitable great crested newt habitat, which given that there is a known population of great crested newts nearby, must take place under a licence. Test Valley Borough Council holds a Great Crested Newt Organisational (or "District") Licence granted by Natural England. This is administered by NatureSpace Partnership through their District Licensing Scheme as the Council's delivery partner. The District Licence must be applied for before determination of the application. The applicant has engaged with Nature Space and the Officer recommendation reflects the requirement to complete this process and for satisfactory consultation with natural England regarding protected species prior to planning permission being granted.
- 8.11 Due to the presence of Abbotswood Local Nature Reserve SINC immediately to the south of the site, a Construction Environmental Management Plan is secured via a pre-commencement condition to ensure the protection of this locally designated site. Subject to this, the proposal would accord with policy E5.
- 8.12 It is noted that the application is supported by information about Biodiversity Net Gain, including a net gain assessment and biodiversity enhancement plan and condition sheets. The Ecologist has commented that these measures should be secured by condition or a legal agreement. However, the application was submitted on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024, prior to the Biodiversity Net Gain legislation coming into force. Therefore, it is not considered reasonable or necessary to secure these measures via a legal agreement.
- 8.13 The Ecologist has commented that as part of the previous planning application for Bourne House, a mitigation package was in place which required the planting of a hedge along the eastern boundary of the site. It appears that this hedge has not been planted and if it is planted now, it will be impacted by the proposals as part of this planning application. However, the case officer has visited the site and there is a hedge along the eastern boundary of the site.

The submitted ecological report includes biodiversity enhancement measures relating to the provision of bat and bird boxes, and these are secured by condition of this recommendation.

**8.14 Amenity**

18 – 26 Magnolia Walk are sited to the east of the application site and the minimum separation distance, measured between the proposed southern car park and the shared boundary with 26 Magnolia Walk is 8.5 metres. Other properties within Magnolia Walk have a separation distance in excess of this. Residential properties also exist to the north along Sandy Lane, the closest of which is Tanglewood, located 14.6 metres to the north of the site. Neighbouring properties Our Bungalow and Ellanna House are sited either side of the access track onto Sandy Lane.

8.15 The proposal involves the construction of a car park which would have a flat surface and by nature would not result in any overbearing impact, loss of day light or sunlight to these neighbours. Consideration has been given to overlooking by users of the proposed car parks, particularly as drivers of lorries would be sat higher in the lorry cab compared to the driver's seat of a car. There is mature vegetation along the east and north boundaries and this, along with the separation distances, is considered to mitigate any overlooking impact.

**8.16 Noise and vibration**

The commercial nature of this location within Belbins Business Park is already well established. There are already areas of hardstanding to the east and south of the Bourne House building which is used for storage and cleaning of refuse and maintenance vehicles. There is also a staff car park to the north of Bourne House and the wider Belbins Business Park is sited to the west of the site. Despite this, noise and vibration needs to be accounted for when considering the design and layout of this proposal as it would have the effect of intensifying the use of the site and moving additional vehicles closer to residential properties within Magnolia Walk.

8.17 The most likely disturbance resulting from this proposal is that from noise and vibration generated by vehicles. Given the position of the existing staff car park to the north of the site and the yard to the east, the proposed car parks are no closer to properties to the north along Sandy Lane. The proposed car park is sited closer to properties within Magnolia Walk, however, it is considered that conditions can be added to the recommendation such that work shall only be undertaken between 07:30 and 18:00 Monday to Friday or 08:00 to 13:00 on Saturdays and at no other time. A further condition is recommended to control external lighting. Subject to these conditions, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable and wouldn't give rise to significant additional neighbour amenity impacts in terms of noise or vibration. The Environmental Protection Officer has not objected to the proposal. It is considered that the application accords with policies E8 and LHW4.

### 8.18 **Odours**

The existing grounds maintenance and small vans would be parked in the proposed southern car park which is closest to residential properties within Magnolia Walk. The new food waste collection vehicles and the existing refuse collection vehicles are to be stored within the lower level behind Bourne House. Due to the storage arrangements of the food waste and refuse vehicles within the lower yard it is not anticipated there would be any additional neighbour amenity impacts in terms of odours, as these vehicles would be stored no closer to residential neighbours within Magnolia Walk. The closest property to the south of the site is 7 Baroona Close which is sited 61 metres away and this separation distance is considered to mitigate any significant neighbour amenity impact. The Environmental Protection Officer has not objected to the proposals and the application accords with policies E8 and LHW4 in this regard.

### 8.19 **Highways**

The food waste collection vehicles would be in addition to the existing fleet, whereby it is anticipated there would be a greater number of vehicle movements into and out of the site. However, the site is served by two existing accesses, one onto Sandy Lane to the north and the other access is to the west through Belbins Industrial Estate. The HCC Highways Officer has raised no in principle objection to the proposals in regard to impact upon the public highway. The proposal doesn't conflict with policy T1.

8.20 The Highways Officer has commented that vehicle tracking for the car park and the truck park should be provided. However, the parking spaces are to be provided on private land and away from any public highway network. As such, it is considered unreasonable and unnecessary to request tracking diagrams in this instance. Despite the absence of these plans, it is considered that the layout would be appropriate in this instance and that the proposal would not result in severe harm to highway safety. The application still accords with policy T1 in this regard.

## 9.0 **CONCLUSION**

9.1 The application accords with the relevant policies of the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) and is therefore acceptable. Permission is recommended, subject to satisfactory resolution of the Great Crested Newts Licence as detailed below.

## 10.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

**Delegate to the Head of Planning and Building to grant planning permission subject to the following:**

- **No unresolvable issues being raised by Nature Space or Test Valley Borough Council Ecologist in respect of a Great Crested Newts District Licence**
- **Completion of satisfactory consultation with Natural England with respect to the impact of the development on protected species (together with any appropriate conditions as required),**

**Then PERMISSION subject to:**

- 1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years from the date of this permission.**  
**Reason: To comply with the provision of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.**
- 2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers**  
**TVBC 300/002 X, TVBC 300/01 X, MJC-23-0177-01 REV 0, MJC-23-0177-03**  
**Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.**
- 3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the measures set out in Sections 14 and 15 'Mitigation recommendations' and 'enhancements' of the Extended Phase 1 Ecological Assessment and Phase 2 Surveys by Phillips Ecology (September 2023) unless varied by a European Protected Species (EPS) license issued by Natural England. Thereafter, mitigation and enhancement features shall be permanently maintained and retained in accordance with the approved details.**  
**Reason: To ensure the favourable conservation status of protected species in accordance with Policy E5 of the Test Valley Revised Local Plan 2016.**
- 4. The development hereby approved shall be undertaken in full accordance with the provisions set out within the MJC Services Ltd Arboricultural Impact Appraisal and Method Statement reference MJC-23-0177 dated 18th September 2023.**  
**Reason: To ensure the enhancement of the development by the retention of existing trees and natural features during the construction phase in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan policy E2.**
- 5. During the construction period, there shall be no building or demolition works, no machinery shall be operated, no processes carried out and no deliveries received or dispatched outside the following times: 07:30 to 18:00 hours Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 hours on Saturday. In addition, no such activities shall take place on Sundays, Bank or Public holidays.**  
**Reason: In the interests of the amenities of neighbouring properties in accordance with Test Valley Borough Local Plan policies E8 and LWH4.**
- 6. Details of any external lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to first installing any such lighting before either car park hereby permitted is occupied. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. Any external lighting shall only be operated when the site is in use.**  
**Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policy E8.**



7. **Prior to commencement of the development hereby permitted, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), incorporating measures to avoid impacts on the adjacent designated site (Abbotswood Local Nature Reserve SINC) and protected species shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall subsequently proceed in accordance with any such approved details.  
Reason: To protect notable locally designated sites and species in accordance with Policy E5 of the Revised Test Valley Local Plan (2016).**

**Note to applicant:**

1. **In reaching this decision Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) has had regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. TVBC work with applicants and their agents in a positive and proactive manner offering a pre-application advice service and updating applicants/agents of issues that may arise in dealing with the application and where possible suggesting solutions.**
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