

7 June 2018



Jake Brown
Planning & Countryside
West Berkshire Council
Market Street
Newbury
RG14 5LD

Dear Mr Brown

Re: 18/00764/OUTMAJ and 18/00828/OUTMAJ – Sandleford Park

This letter deals only with matters that concern cyclists.

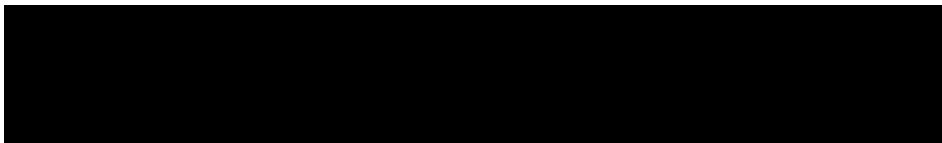
We refer you to our responses to previous applications dated 3 Jan 2017 (16/03309/OUTMAJ), and 3 Nov 2016, 29 Jan 2016 and 14 Dec 2016 all relating to 15/02300/OUTMAJ). Rather than repeat every comment, we simply wish to reiterate our views and comment on any new aspects of the current linked applications.

In our 29 Jan 16 letter we listed nine recommendations (S1 – S9), additional to the 12 recommendations in our letter of 14 Dec 15. All but S1 and S4 of these 21 recommendations remain relevant to this application, with the justifications in those letters.

The hill between Monks Lane and the Kennet Valley has not gone away and is steep enough on the return journey from Newbury to deter all but the fittest and most confident cyclists. Added to that, we see no sign that the Applicants have accepted our view that their modelling is flawed as regards commuter modal shift if they use the whole of either St Johns or Falkland wards (from any census dataset), because the south Wash Common – parts of those wards are very different to the northern parts. Unless most cyclists have electric bikes the forecast numbers of commuters and shoppers who will prefer biking over using a car are very optimistic.

The proportion of working age people living at Sandleford and working locally is tending to reduce significantly. Train services are improving and rising house prices in London are forcing people to move west, as office space is converted to flats in Newbury's own employment areas. This also reduces the likelihood of even fit workers cycling to work. However it increases the need for better cycle routes between Wash Common and Newbury rail station, as well as for bike parking there.

We are pleased to see that the Applicants propose to help fund an on-road cycle lane between Warren Road and the St Johns roundabout, which will help commuter cyclists especially on the uphill return leg. This was Recommendation S1 in our letter of 29 Jan 2016.



All other recommendations in that letter also appear to have been taken account of. However we are less happy that our recommendations of 14 Nov 2015 have been adopted.

We still wish to see bus lanes on the Sandford link, partly to incentivise the use of buses between Greenham Business Park, Sandford and the town centre but also so that confident cyclists can choose the A339 at peak times (downhill a.m.).

We remain very opposed to a roundabout at the main Monks Lane access point for vehicles, for the reasons given in our Nov 2015 letter. We would like to see a light-controlled junction here, destroying less of the perfectly good cycle path and being far more 'cycle friendly'. We wish to see the Monks Lane shared-use path adapted to provide separation between pedestrians and cyclists: it has sufficient width and use. Recommendation 5-8 all still apply and seem not to have been considered yet.

In summary, we continue to oppose many aspects of this development in principle and believe that more needs to be done before a sustainable development – from a transport point of view – can be achieved and approved for detailed examination.

Yours sincerely



Dr Tony Vickers, West Berkshire Spokes Highways Officer¹

¹ SPOKES is an all volunteer organisation. Dr Vickers is a retired chartered surveyor and former part-time lecturer at Kingston University. He is a co-founder of SPOKES and was a Member of West Berkshire Council from 2003 to 2015. He lives locally and bikes in Newbury almost every day.

