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# HIGHWAYS RESPONSE

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**To:** Matthew Shepherd  
Senior Planning Officer

**Our Ref:** 23/02094/FULMAJ

**From:** Paul Goddard  
Highways Development Control  
Team Leader

**Your Ref:** 23/02094/FULMAJ

**Extn:**

**Date:** June 18<sup>th</sup> 2024

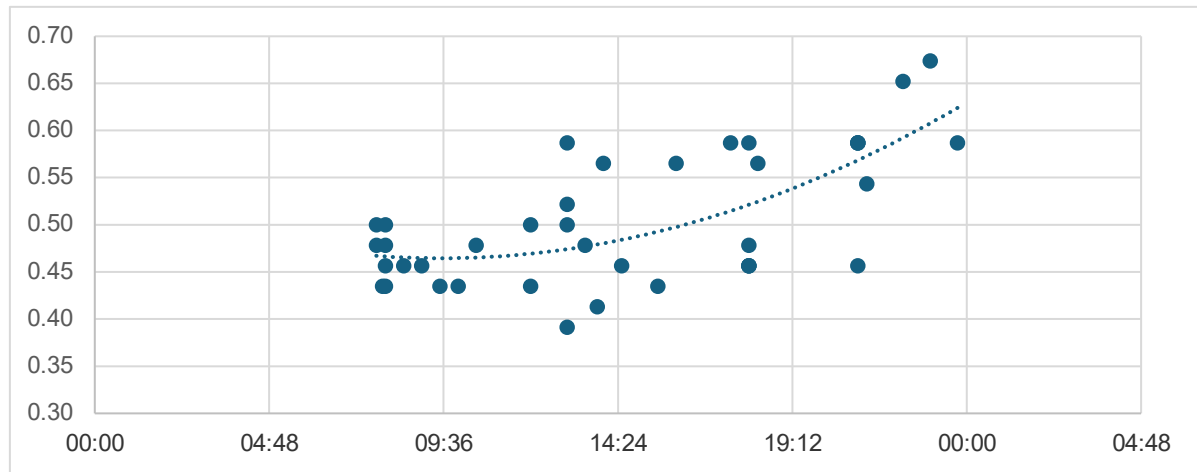
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## The Kennet Shopping Centre, Newbury

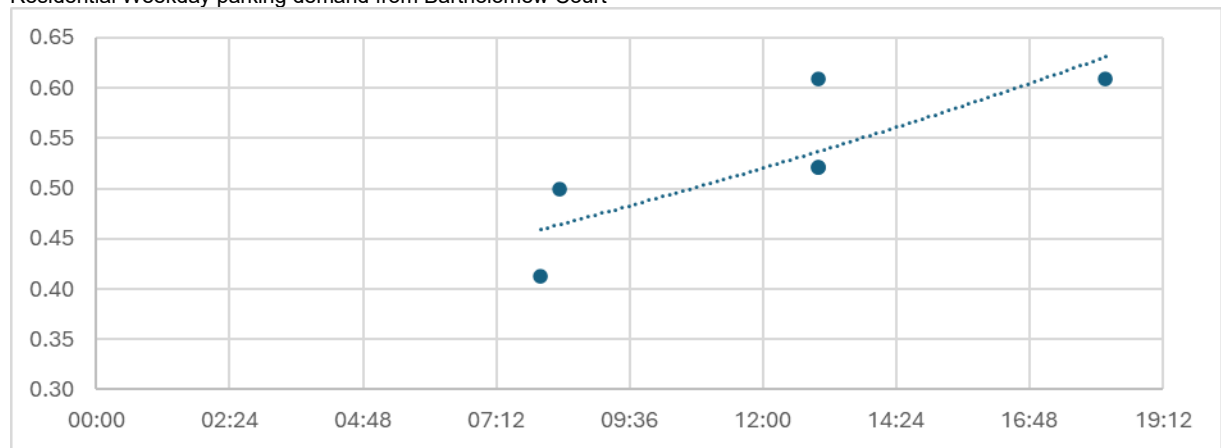
**Full planning permission for the redevelopment of the Kennet Centre comprising the partial demolition of the existing building on site and the development of new residential dwellings (Use Class C3) and residents' ancillary facilities; commercial, business and service floorspace including office (Class E (a, b, c, d, e, f, and g)); access, parking, and cycle parking; landscaping and open space; sustainable energy installations; associated works, and alterations to the retained Vue Cinema and multi storey car park.**

1. I refer to the above planning application. This response covers the issue of car parking provision within the site.
2. I would like to refer to the latest submissions from the applicant's agents regarding the above planning application. Once again, I need to state that this site is not exceptional with regards to the application of the car parking standards contained within Policy P1 of the Housing Site Allocations DPD. I have mentioned this in more detail in previous responses, and therefore I consider that I do not need to go into further detail again here, except to mention that we do not wish for any precedence to be set for any future development in any town centre in West Berkshire.
3. As mentioned previously, according to Policy P1, the proposed residential part of the development requires 471 car parking spaces including residential visitor parking. With 475 car parking spaces provided, Policy P1 would at least be provided for the residential element, but the question has always been whether this level would work with the dual use town centre visitor car parking, and what would the implications be, if it didn't, and could this then be mitigated.
4. At its own time and expense, the LHA has assessed this planning application, an assessment that has included undertaking its own surveys when required. This includes a number of visits on different days and different times of the day to the nearby Bartholomew Court development of flats some 150 metres to the south of the application site. This development of 46 flats was provided with 46 car parking spaces and did feature in the car parking surveys that took place that informed the parking standards set in Policy P1. The results shown below suggest that the car parking standards set in Policy P1 are still robust, as they go forward within the next Local Plan. Car parking per flat at a rate of 0.43 to 0.57 has been observed during the day, which is fairly high, possible because of more working from home. From 16:00, as would be expected, higher rates were observed between 0.57 to 0.7 cars per flat. A trend line on the graph that will be used further of the expected car parking demand for residential development is

shown. We have also considered a lower and higher trend for the projections. I am due some more Saturday data, which I may add later if required.



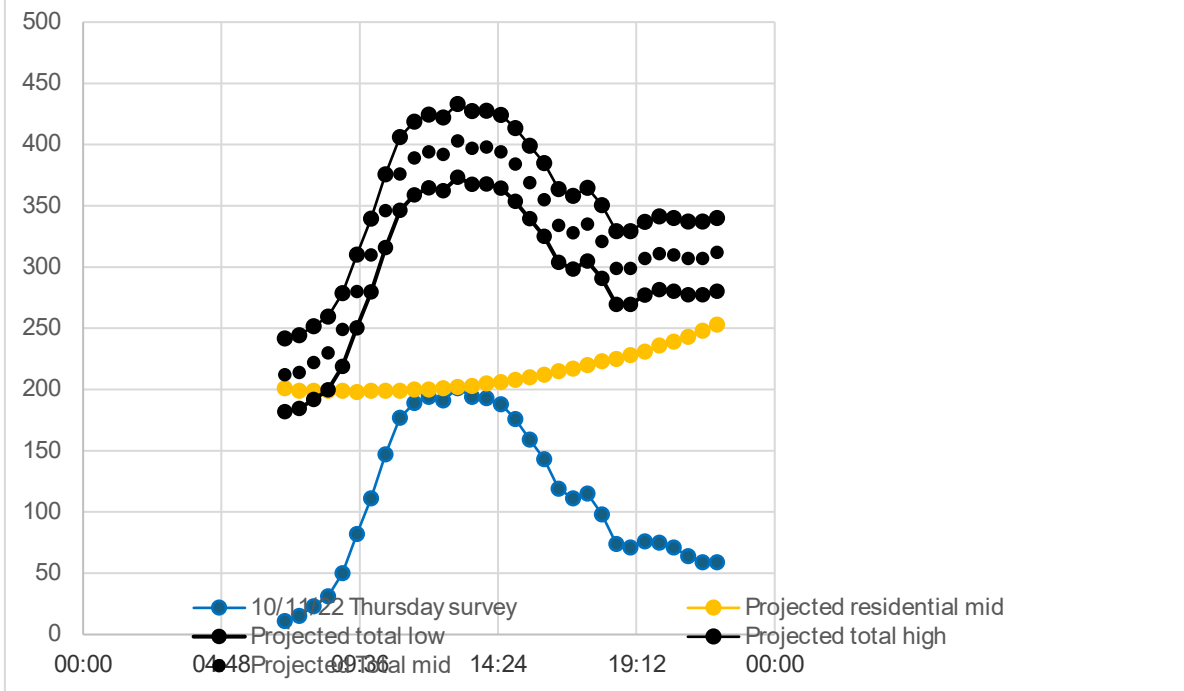
Residential Weekday parking demand from Bartholomew Court



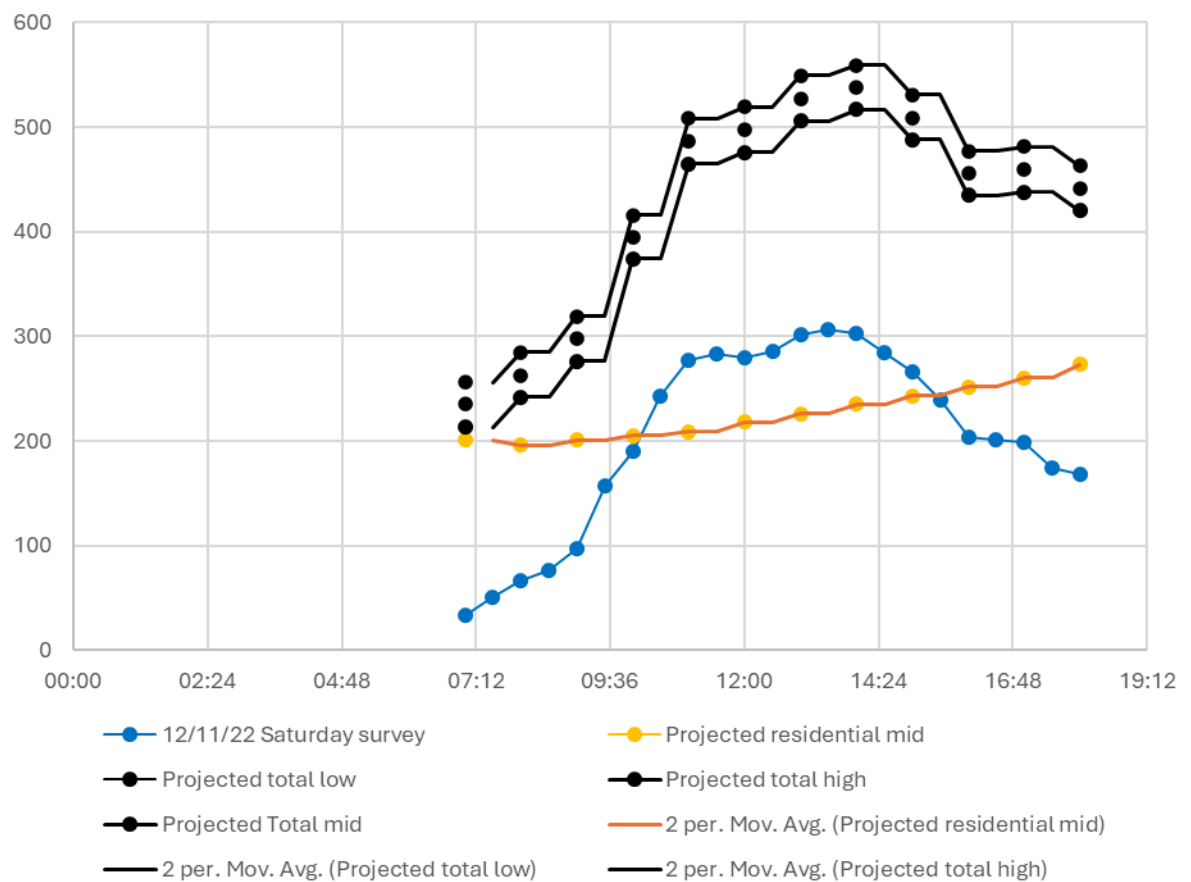
Residential Saturday parking demand from Bartholomew Court

5. Using the above rates from Bartholomew Court, and the car parking surveys undertaken by the applicant within the Kennet Shopping Centre MSCP from November 2022, we have added the expected residential demand to total as shown on the graphs below. From these results, it would seem that during the week, on most days, all residential and town centre visitor car parking can be accommodated within the MSCP, but on a Saturday, it would seem that demand for residential car parking and town centre car parking will exceed the number of car parking spaces provided around the middle of the day on most Saturdays and possibly Sundays too when more residents are home.

### Thursday parking projections



### Saturday parking projections



6. As mentioned previously, we consider that the Kennet Shopping Centre is the main go to car park for the Newbury town centre, especially for all visitors from the southern and middle areas of the town, and we consider this will continue regardless of how much retail offer there is within the Kennet shopping centre as existing or proposed. We consider that the people of Newbury and beyond will continue to use this car park to visit all that is on offer in Newbury town centre. In addition, the applicants and their agents have argued and continue to argue that with a “build for rent” scheme such as this, the parking demand for residential could be less. Unfortunately, as mentioned within my previous response, insufficient evidence has been provided to sway me that I should give this more consideration at this time. The locations provided where such “build for rent” projects have been sampled continue to be much larger towns and cities than Newbury, and I would expect parking provision to be at that much lower level for any residential use in towns and cities of that size including Reading. It is also not my role to have concern regarding the parking standards that other local authorities may apply to their centres. My role is to apply the policies that we have here in Newbury, and to ensure the future vitality of the Newbury town centre. On this basis, we consider that the above projections are robust.
7. Should demand for the Kennet Shopping Centre MSCP exceed the number of spaces provided, then consideration must be given to the capacity of the town centre car parks, particularly at weekends. We have therefore also undertaken car parking surveys of occupancy within Newbury town centre car parks for a Thursday and a Saturday to inform the availability of car parking with the car parks between 12:00 and 14:00 hours, particularly those closest to the application site south of the river Kennet. It needs to be mentioned that parking in The Wharf area is being reduced by some 40 car parking spaces due to improvements planned along the canal. Despite this, it would seem that there is enough car parking available within the town centre during a Saturday, but only at the Market Street MSCP when as mentioned above, the Kennet shopping centre may be full with the proposal. The car parks south of the river Kennet are well used, but there would seem to be significant availability of car parking in the Market Street MSCP, even with any expected demand from the Market Street residential development when that development is fully occupied. The difficulty with this, is that the Market Street MSCP was not designed for shoppers, it was designed for commuters and offices, and is not at all attractive for use by shoppers that would encourage its use.

Car Park	Total Empty Spaces
Newbury Corn Exchange (Bear Lane) Car Park	<b>8</b>
Newbury Central (KFC) Car Park	<b>16</b>
Newbury Library Car Park	<b>29</b>
Newbury Wharf Car Park	<b>6</b>
Newbury Eight Bells Arcade Car Park	<b>21</b>
Newbury Station Multi Storey Car Park - Ground Floor	<b>68</b>
Newbury Station Multi Storey Car Park - 1st Floor	<b>27</b>
Newbury Station Multi Storey Car Park - 2nd Floor	<b>53</b>
Newbury Station Multi Storey Car Park - 3rd Floor	<b>74</b>
Newbury Station Multi Storey Car Park - 4th Floor	<b>84</b>
Newbury Station Multi Storey Car Park - 5th Floor	<b>45</b>

Availability of empty car parking spaces on Saturday June 8th, 2024, 12:00 to 14:00

8. Within the applicant's submissions, reference has been made to the Visual Message Signing (VMS). These signs provide details the availability of car parking within town centre car parks to visitors approaching the town centre. This was always intended to allow an informed choice prior to reaching the town centre and to avoid traffic driving around the town centre looking for car parking. This would be useful for occasions, particularly on a Saturday where the Kennet Shopping Centre MSCP could be full with the proposed development. The VMS was installed in association with the Parkway shopping development that opened in 2011. Unfortunately, the VMS is now outdated and is in need of being upgraded and replaced. This has not been too much of an issue since changes in shopping behaviour that was increased further with the COVID-19 pandemic. However clearly with the set of results above, the need for a fully working VMS system would become more necessary by the provision of this development. Therefore, we consider as with the Parkway development back in the late 2000s that this development provides a financial contribution to the updating of the visual message system full car parks in the centre of Newbury. It is understood that upgrading the signs with cost around £1 million, of which the Council has around half, and I would suggest this development provides the other half as a Section 106 contribution.
9. It is noted that a basic Car Park Management Plan has been submitted. It explains that the residential parking within the 83 undercroft car parking spaces would be available to residents only through a permit scheme, and that these permits would be available to residents to purchase on a first come first serve basis and would be priced the same as parking within the MSCP. Residents would also be able to park within the MSCP. Again, parking would be available on a first come first served basis and residents would be charged the prevailing going rate to use the MSCP. Residents or the public would be able to park in any space.
10. The entrance barrier into the MSCP currently prevents drivers from accessing the car park after 22.30 hours and would be amended to allow access after 22.30 hours.
11. The Kennet Shopping Centre MSCP is owned by the applicant, Lochailort Newbury Ltd and is leased to West Berkshire Council. There are a number of details that need to be considered within a CPMP including how additional staff to manage the car park 24/7 will be provided, the funding for this, and the general amount of funding that the Council will continue to receive from this car park. While it may not affect the overall above calculations, there was surprise that the 66 car parking spaces within the MSCP which are allocated to West Berkshire Council are being removed.
12. To avoid any financial losses to the Council going forward from the future running of the Kennet shopping Centre MSCP, we consider that all details regarding the CPMP should be agreed prior to any approval.
13. We consider on balance that there is a potential way forward, but there are number of issues that we still need to discuss internally:
  - a. A financial contribution of £500,000 towards the upgrading and replacement of the town centre VMS, with any contribution timings to be agreed.
  - b. The 66 car parking spaces used by the Council.
  - c. A financial contribution towards the upgrading of the Market Street MSCP for use by shoppers. The exact details of this and what is required is still to be finalised.
  - d. To agree all details regarding the CPMP including all financial aspects.
14. The LHA is currently somewhat balanced on all this. While Policy P1 has been complied with regards to residential, at weekends, but seemingly weekends only, town centre visitors are highly likely to be displaced from the Kennet Shopping Centre MSCP, and that causes some concern for us. We hope the applicants and their agents will engage

with us positively on this going forward. Otherwise, the planning application will continue to be recommended for refusal on parking grounds as previously mentioned.

**Paul Goddard**  
**Highways Development Control Team Leader**