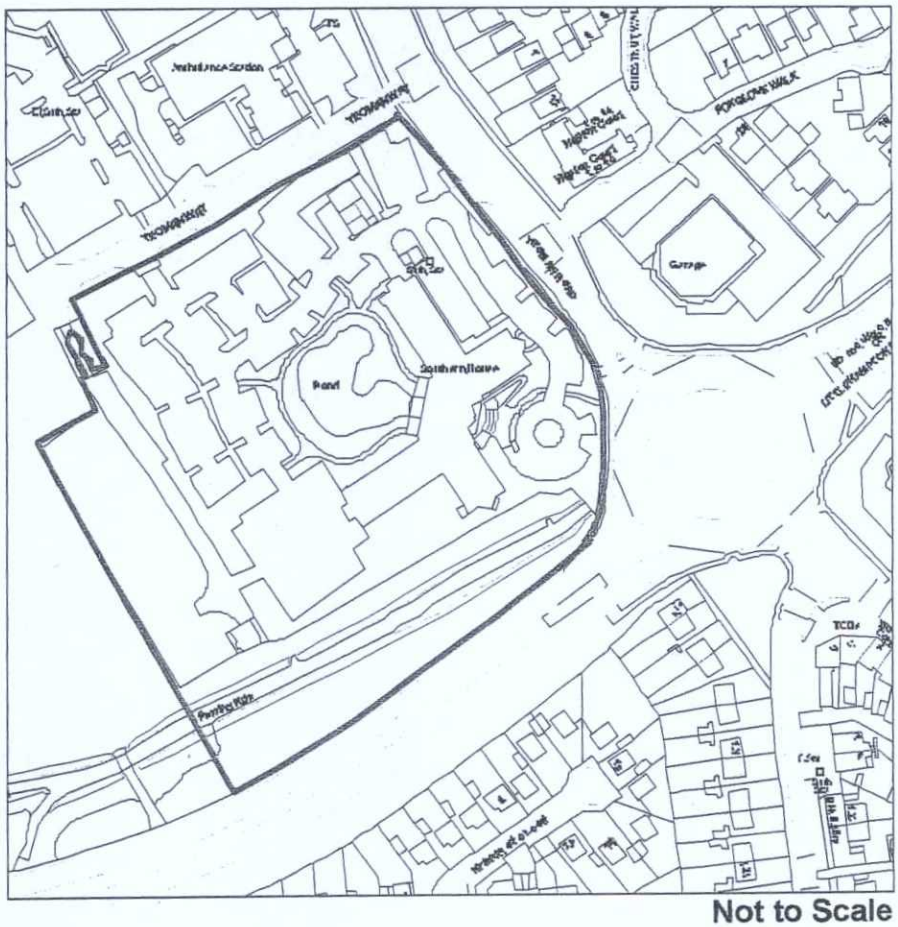
WB/09/0794/FULL
NOR
PD

Mr G Deans

Location : Southern House Yeoman Road

Proposal: Proposed rationalisation, reorganisation of existing car park and accesses; provision of additional parking area; retention and continued use of existing overspill parking area; provision of smoking shelter; provision of cycle shelter; lighting provision.



Not to Scale

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1. THE PROPOSAL AND THE SITE

This is a proposal to rationalise and extend the existing car park, alter the traffic access and internal circulation, reconfigure the landscaping and remodel the cycle parking facilities and smoking shelter.

The site is the Southern Water regional headquarters located to the north west of the roundabout junction of Littlehampton Road (A2032) and Yeoman Road on the western fringe of the town in the West Durrington area. The site

is large, rectangular and flat, being some 2.6 hectares in size. The building was purpose-built for Southern Water in the 1980s and faces the roundabout. It is four storeys high, providing, some 7000 sq ms of (gross internal) floorspace and currently accommodating around 660 staff (full time or equivalent).

The principal access to the site is from Yeoman Road and uncontrolled, save for a ban on right turns (to the roundabout) during rush hours. However, two secondary/ emergency accesses are also provided off Yeoman Way, the more western access being single lane width only and sited on a bend. These are normally gated. Visitors enter the building from the front (east) and staff from the rear (west).

Car parking for 404 spaces is currently provided. This includes 94 spaces on the far western edge of the site which exist without the benefit of planning permission and are not formally laid out (the applicant suggests there are between 75 and 83 spaces). The authorised car park is surfaced in tarmacadam and features extensive landscaping and is lit by lighting columns. It comprises a large number of trees and low hedges running between banks of spaces and around the perimeter. A lake is situated behind the office block in the centre of the site. There are cycle sheds in the north eastern part of the site and a small, rudimentary smoking shelter behind the lake.

The site is adjoined to the west and north by Yeoman Way and business uses, including the recently completed Yeoman Gate development To the east of Yeoman Road are business and residential uses. The southern boundary of the site, adjacent to Littlehampton Road comprises a long, deep green space, through which runs Ferring Rife, a local stream. The area to the south of Ferring Rife is principally woodland but the area to the north is principally a grassy bank. This area is currently gated off from the main office site and car park. The green space continues to the west of the site, adjacent to Littlehampton Road and into Northbrook College.

The proposal is to regularize the existing unauthorised car parking and rationalize and rearrange the authorised car parking areas to create an entirely new car parking area by encroaching onto the grassy bank north of Ferring Rife (providing some 30 spaces). This would result in a net increase within the whole site of 101 spaces, raising the total to 505 spaces within the whole site. The landscaping would be slightly reconfigured to soften the appearance of the parking areas and to compensate for the loss of some planting required to rationalise car parking. Screen boundary planting would remain and, overall, tree planting would increase using native species. The regularised western parking area and new parking area adjacent to Ferring Rife would be grass-creted and would be porous to offer sustainable drainage.

New cycle parking for 35 cycles would be provided to the east of the existing store to raise levels to 60. This would be in the form of clear curved shelters. A new smoking shelter would be sited behind the lake in the form of a glazed rectangular box shelter. New lighting would be provided and existing columns rearranged to optimise coverage.

Vehicular access would be reconfigured so that the front entrance off Yeoman Road becomes the main visitors' access and is barrier controlled by means of a vehicle registration recognition system. The most eastern access in Yeoman Way would become the main staff access, supplemented by the most western access which would be "in" only for highway safety reasons.

The motivation behind the application is Southern Water's decision to transfer some 200 additional staff from other premises (outside of the town, including Falmer) to these offices. This raises staff numbers to some 860. It adds to the billing and call centre functions relocated here in recent years. The new staff will be accommodated by internal rationalisation of existing office space at Southern House. The applicants are keen to start the works urgently to tie in with the relocation timetable.

The application is supported by a Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement and draft Green Travel Plan. It was preceded by officer discussions with the Highway Authority and Worthing Borough Council and follows withdrawal of an earlier similar application in 2006 (WB/06/0881/FULL refers) which sought to regularise unauthorized parking and rationalise the whole arrangement (omitting new car parking adjacent to Ferring Rife).

2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

WB/83/1014/OUT: Outline application for the erection of new offices for use as headquarters for Southern Water Authority on land (5.23 acres) at the junction of Littlehampton Road and Yeoman Road (north-west of roundabout). Approved 18th July 1984.

WB/87/0638/OUT: Outline application for the erection of new offices for use as headquarters for Southern Water Authority (Renewal of WB/1014/83). Approved 11th August 1987.

WB/87/914/ARM: Construction of three/four-storey office building (Approximately 6,500 square metres) for use by Southern Water Authority as new headquarters (Approval of Reserved Matters subsequent to outline consent WB/1014/83). Approved 3rd November 1987.

WB/00/0235/FULL: Formation of new surfaced car parking area with lighting. Withdrawn 2000.

WB/06/0881/FULL: Retrospective application for the extension of parking area. Withdrawn 2006.

WB/07/1143/FULL: Provision of a smoking shelter. (Retrospective). Refused 2007.

3. APPLICANT'S DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

The applicant has submitted a Design and Access Statement as follows:-

"Design Principles and Concepts

The application does not involve any substantive new buildings or structures. The proposed smoking shelter and additional cycle store are both semi-open structures with Perspex screens to offer some degree of protection from the prevailing wind. They have been kept to a modest size and are located to be accessible to the main building. The designs are intended to be minimalist and unobtrusive. In practice they will be readily assimilated into the wider area of parking. The cycle storage shelter is sited close to the site's Yeoman's Road entrance adjacent to the existing cycle parking facilities. The relevant details are shown on the submitted drawings no. 2260-20.

Layout

The shelter and store do not raise any specific layout issues, each has been sited to be readily accessible to the people using them

The proposed car park reorganisation is aimed at providing an efficient and improved facility in terms of car parking spaces, ingress to and egress from the site and circulation around the site. The proposed layout incorporates existing parking areas, an overspill area to the west of this and a proposed new area of parking along the northern side of the Ferring Rife. The proposals incorporate new tree planting as a visual improvement to the overspill area that helps to break up the pattern of parking bays. The existing and proposed site layouts are submitted as part of the application on drawing nos. 2260.15 and 2260.16 respectively.

The parking layout aims to reduce the present level of use associated with the Yeoman Road access and will allow a better managed means of access to the site by drivers. The entrance barriers will be swipe card controlled with the potential for future number plate recognition.

The proposed layout improves internal circulation and also seeks to reduce previous parts of the car park that had poor visibility at particular junctions and corners.

Appearance

The appearance of the smoking shelter and proposed cycle shelter are considered to be of an insignificant scale to have impact in the overall context of the application site.

The present overspill car parking area will be improved from its present informal appearance. The western part (three rows) which is the majority of the area, has proposed surfacing that will provide a 'green surface' and will be porous to allow rainwater to percolate through the medium into the soil and away by natural means. The eastern row (fourth row from the western

boundary) is presently finished in tarmac and this form of finish will be retained.

The central (double row) of parking will be broken up by new tree planting to add a vertical dimension to existing site planting to this part of the site. This aims to break up the parking rows and to provide an attractive feature for this part of the site.

The proposed new parking row adjacent to the Rife will also comprise a green porous surface which is felt to be appropriate to this part of the site.

Existing site boundary planting will be retained. This provides a high level of screening in particular from the southern and eastern boundaries and from the north (Yeoman Way). An existing hedge and associated planting will be kept along the site's western boundary where it abuts the newer development of Yeoman Gate.

The frontage of Southern House and the main area of landscaping to the rear of the building and on its southern side will not be altered to maintain its mature landscaped setting.

Scale & amount of development

The reasons for the application and the proposed parking arrangements are set out in greater detail in the following Planning Statement.

In numerical terms the proposed car parking will provide an essential level of provision to cater for present and relocated staff.

The two proposed shelters are of a size and scale to provide for necessary staff provision. The cycle storage shelter and additional racking proposed will increase provision for secure storage to 60 bicycles.

Landscaping

The application proposes new tree planting including species that are present as part of the site's existing landscaping. The proposed tree planting is described at paragraph 4.3. It aims to provide a vertical dimension to planting at this part of the site, and as it matures, to provide a more substantial green canopy to add to the overall visual amenity of the site. Key established areas of existing landscaping (to the front, rear and south of Southern House) will be retained to maintain the building's setting.

Access

The application does not alter access to the main building either for staff or visitors.

Existing disabled parking spaces for visitors will be retained at the front of the building. Provision for staff is made as and when required and is addressed as part of the wider management of the site and its resources.

The parking, access and circulation proposals are explained in more detail in the Planning Statement.

Access to the smoking shelter and cycle store are referred to at paragraph 2.1 of this Statement.

Access gates will be re-installed in the boundary with Ferring Rife in order to provide access to the watercourse. In addition the porous car parking area along the Rife will be safeguarded to provide access for maintenance purpose when necessary.

PLANNING STATEMENT

Background to application and overview

1. *Southern Water have occupied Southern House for a period of around 30 years. The office building and car park was constructed for their specific occupation and needs at that time. Other office premises currently occupied by Southern Water include those at Falmer, Chatham and Otterbourne. Since its construction, Southern Water's staffing structure and numbers have been changing as new services are provided from their premises to meet the requirements of the Company as it has evolved. The premises comprise their operational headquarters and now incorporate Southern Water's billing centre and call centre. Establishing these facilities at Southern House has seen a significant increase in staffing levels from the period when the premises were first occupied. In addition, establishing their Revenue and Customer Services departments has also seen a rise in staff numbers accordingly.*

2. *Southern Water now face a choice in terms of how best to utilise their present office sites. The options open to them will require one or more of the sites to be vacated and for staff from those premises to be re-accommodated elsewhere. Southern Water's preferred option is to maintain Southern House Worthing as their Headquarters whilst bringing in key staff from the other premises. Other options would be to relocate to one of their other sites potentially with the transfer of their Worthing base elsewhere.*

3. *The site area of Southern House represented by the 'red-line' application site area is 2.6 hectares (6.4 acres). The total gross floorspace of Southern House is 6949 square metres, the office floorspace comprising 4949 square metres. The former figure includes outbuildings such as garages and stores and non-office areas within the main building.*

4. *Current staffing levels are in the order of 660 though this figure naturally fluctuates as any organisation of this size will see staff movement and changes in staffing patterns. However, this is seen as a reliable figure at the present time. With the need to relocate staff*

from other premises within a period of 6 months, Southern Water are looking towards an increased staffing level and need to accommodate a figure in the order of 200 further staff to bring overall numbers of staff at Southern House to somewhere around 860 persons. The proposed increase in staffing levels is considered to further enhance Worthing's employment base and Southern Water as one of the key employers in the Borough.

Proposals

Car parking

5. *The proposed arrangements to accommodate incoming relocated staff will be achieved without the need to physically extend the office building. Reorganising the present office accommodation to increase the staffing density within the building will accomplish this. This will be achieved by improving the efficiency in terms of how the office space is used.*

6. *The changing pattern of corporate office facilities has had, and will continue to have consequences in terms of the numbers of staff travelling to and from Southern House and how their pattern of travel can be accommodated and effectively managed. The need for upgraded car parking facilities both in terms of layout and numbers is instrumental in this, as too is the recognition for existing Company travel policies to be improved to encourage less use of the private car and more use of other modes of transport. Southern Water have an ongoing Travel Plan which is in the process of being upgraded to further these objectives. This has been discussed with Officers from West Sussex County Council Highways as part of a series of pre-application meetings that have been held with the Borough Council, the County Council and the Environment Agency. A revised Travel Plan is being produced by Southern Water and a draft version containing relevant heads is included as part of this application (this was an area discussed with WBC and WSCC Highways).*

7. *Whilst it is likely to have a positive effect in reducing overall car usage for the journey to work, it is undeniable that the overall increase in staffing density will require the reorganisation of Southern House's present car parking with an increase in the number of spaces provided.*

8. *At the moment Southern House has 404 car parking spaces including 3 disabled spaces at the front of the building for visitors. These areas are principally to the north and west of the building and include an informal overspill parking area abutting the site's western boundary. The breakdown of spaces shown on the submitted existing layout details is as follows:*

Main car park	*310 spaces*

Overspill parking area	*94 spaces (these are not formally laid out as shown on the drawing and in practice offer between 75 and 83 spaces)*
Total	*404 spaces*
Proposed parking area including rationalisation of existing parking areas and proposed additional spaces	*101 spaces*
Overall proposed total	*505 spaces*

9. *The current overspill parking area is partly hard-surfaced in tarmac (where it abuts the main car park); the remainder is rolled and compressed type 1. The former section has been in use for over 10 years (ie the fourth 'row' from the western boundary), the remaining three 'rows' have been used for a period of 4-5 years when the area was surfaced to accommodate parking demands arising from staff increases at that time.*

10. *The proposal is to surface the western 3 rows of the overspill car park and the proposed parking along the Ferring Rife in a new Grass-crete surface that is porous and allows surface water to percolate through into the ground. It allows grass to grow through as an amenity feature whilst at the same time provides a suitably robust surface. This is considered to be an appropriate form of surfacing treatment that in practice is expected to at least maintain a neutral position in terms of surface water run-off, though in practice it is expected that the proposals will result in a positive improvement. As the application does not involve any material development that would cause additional surface water runoff, nor would interrupt the flow of flood water, flood risk has not been seen as an issue to the application as there is no increase in flood risk. In practice it is expected that flood risk may decrease through these works.*

11. *In pre-application discussions with Officers, it was surmised that the unauthorised overspill parking area could be construed as being lawful based on it being operational development that has been carried out and used for a period in excess of 4 years. Notwithstanding the issues that might be construed from this, the application seeks to regularise the use of this area of the site as part of a comprehensive approach to the parking and access arrangements for Southern House.*

Travel Plan

12. *Southern Water have produced an updated and expanded Travel Plan that is submitted as part of this application. It contains a detailed framework of the measures that the Company seeks to introduce and areas where existing measures are to be reinforced and improved. The aim of the Travel Plan is to achieve an overall reduction in sole - driver car usage to and from the site and to encourage non-car forms of travel to work including walking and cycling and public transport. It*

recognises that some 45% of staff will not have access to the upgraded and improved parking facilities, which in itself places a responsibility on staff to car share either by informal means or by more formal (organised) means. Because of this situation, the restriction on car usage to and from Southern House is self-regulating. However, the Travel Plan recognises that all reasonable effort needs to be made to reduce overall car journeys to the site by 15% over a 5 year period. This area was discussed in detail with Messrs Gledhill and Mouland at the pre-application stage. During those meetings it was recognised that the structure and composition of the Southern House staff base did not fall into a simple category as there are billing and call centres operating from the premises that have much more concentrated staffing densities than ordinary office use a point which subsequent discussions with a Trics data consultant (Ian Coles) confirmed). To provide a properly representative set of baseline data, it is proposed that Southern Water produce staff movement surveys that incorporate an analysis of their methods of journey to work as the baseline data for the Travel Plan. This can be carried out if necessary through independent means. WSCC officers felt that the submitted Travel Plan Heads could be agreed as an 'in principle' document at the application stage, with the submission of a detailed Travel Plan document reserved by condition.

Landscaping

13. *Planting 'diamonds' will be incorporated into the parking areas to provide space for new tree planting. This will help to break up the overspill parking area and to reinforce the amount of tree cover on the northern part of the site. Species proposed will be appropriate to the location and use of the site and the selected species as below reflect the types of trees that have become established elsewhere in and around the application site.*

Planting and maintenance details

14. *Stock planted will be standard trees, which will have appropriate rabbit protection. Plants to be placed in hand dug holes of appropriate depth and provided with appropriate type of fertilizer, firmed in and watered. Any plants requiring support will be accordingly staked. The applicants will be responsible for the maintenance and potential replacement of planting in this landscaped area. Inspections of the area will take place at weekly intervals and watering by hand carried out in periods of drought. Appropriate hand weeding and litter clearance will be carried out at such times. Any plants found to have been damaged or to have died will be replaced within a period of 5 years from planting. Pruning and shaping of trees will take place as and when this may be required, though the extent of this is expected to be very limited during the early years. General care of the planted area will be in association with the upkeep of other planted areas at the application site.*

%	Species
10	Acer Griseum (Paperbark Maple)
10	Alnus Glutinosa (Alder)
40	Carpinus Betulus (Hornbeam)
10	Crataegus Monogyna
20	Prunus Spp (Cherry)
10	Sorbus Aria (Whitebeam)

15. *In terms of the character of the site, the proposals will retain boundary landscaping (including the prominent landscaped belt adjacent to the Ferring Rife) and the key landscaped area and pond to the west of the building.*

Lighting

16. *New lighting is proposed in the overspill and new parking areas. For continuity of design, the types of columns and lighting units will match those that are located elsewhere in the site. The columns are 7 m in height. The lighting units incorporate diffusers to angle light downwards to prevent light spillage upwards and outwards to prevent unnecessary and avoidable light pollution. Photographs are submitted with the application to show details of the existing lighting units and columns. The location of the proposed units is shown on the submitted site layout drawing.*

Access

17. *As part of the proposals to reorganise and improve its parking facilities, Southern Water have assessed the present access arrangements to and from the site. As a result, the scheme incorporates changes to the form of ingress and egress and seeks to utilise the present access from Yeoman Road along with two further existing site accesses off Yeoman Way. This arrangement will allow staff and visitor vehicles to be better separated and to relieve pressure on the current Yeoman Road access. Staff vehicle access will be barrier controlled with the potential for number plate recognition technology to be introduced in the future to add to the level of management of staff parking use.*

Secure bicycle parking

18 *As part of the pre-application discussions held with WBC and WSCC, the provision of improved secure cycle storage was discussed. At that stage, the possibilities of locating a Perspex tunnel-shaped structure at the front of the building had been explored and details were tabled. The structure was to accommodate up to 60 bicycles with a lockable entrance doorway. Since those meetings, further site investigations have indicated that the structure cannot in practice be accommodated in this location.*

19. *Alternative options have been assessed and the most practical solution is to provide an upgrade of the present cycle storage facility which is located as part of a cluster of outbuildings within the site, to the west of the Yeoman's Road entrance. At the moment the area can accommodate 24/25 bicycles and will be refurbished. There is also an existing area of open cycle storage that will be improved with the addition of a semi-open cycle store. The structure will have a perspex screen to offer some degree of protection from the prevailing weather. Both of the areas will be secured. The reorganisation of this area will take the level of provision to 60 cycles. However, the upgrading of secure bicycle parking features in Southern Water's Travel Plan as part of its commitment to encouraging non-car based means of travel to the premises.*

Smoking shelter

20. *The proposed smoking shelter replaces a temporary facility with a permanent arrangement for staff. The proposed location to the west of the rear of the building is accessible to staff and in an area that is sufficiently away from entrances and windows. The structure is intended to be relatively simple, with a Perspex screen to offer shelter from prevailing weather. However, the aim is not to make the facility too elaborate but to provide a functional facility for use by the staff. Planting exists around the site which will help to screen the structure, though this will be readily absorbed within the wider open site. Drawings are submitted with the planning application along with details from the manufacturers.*

Supporting comments

21. *The driver for this application is the transfer of upwards of 200 additional staff from other Southern Water premises. Coupled with establishing the billing centre and call centre at Southern House, the net result has been a significant increase in staff numbers. The current staff relocation is being accommodated through a programme of internal space reorganisation. In more usual circumstances, (where companies plan for higher levels of additional employment), this will be done by extending their premises. In such cases an allowance for additional car parking can be made.*

22. *Southern Water's proposals are a-typical in that the additional staffing levels will be achieved through a more rational and efficient use of existing office floorspace and no physical extensions are proposed. However, there is a clear requirement to retain the present overspill parking area and to provide additional parking through the reorganisation of their current parking areas along with the provision of a new parking area both being necessary to maintain the site as Southern Water's operational base.*

23. *In numerical terms, Southern House will accommodate in the order of 860 staff and including the proposed provision, 505 parking spaces in*

total will be available, (33 of these spaces will be at the front of the building and used for visitors parking). In practice 860 staff will have access to 472 parking spaces. This will clearly require some 45% of staff to either car share, cycle, walk or use public transport to their place of work. In terms of sustainable transport objectives, this situation effectively drives itself through unavoidable necessity. Although additional parking provision is proposed, nearly half of Southern Water's staff will not have access to it. Southern Water already actively encourage non-car means of travel to work, though this is being moved forward in their draft Travel Plan with a wider-reaching series of initiatives to further promote the active use of public transport, walking and cycling and car sharing. In terms of the latter, it is intended that a section of the car park will be designated for car sharing only as a further way of encouraging the more efficient use of the car. Other initiatives to promote alternative means of transport other than the sole use of the car are set out in the draft Travel Plan accompanying the application.

24. *The proposed reorganisation and additions to the car parking facilities will have an additional benefit in dissuading staff from parking in nearby residential streets and in other parts of the surrounding business estates. This is considered to be an important issue particularly when additional staff are to be accommodated at the application site. Coupled with the aims of their updated Travel Plan, a balance is sought between use of the car (and appropriate facilities for on-site parking), limitation of demands for off-site, street parking and the avoidance of car parking through car sharing, walking and cycling and the use of public transport.*

25. *The proposals described in this Statement will allow Southern House to continue to operate effectively as Southern Water's Headquarters building, providing a comprehensive range of services from a core office base. The increase in employment at the site is felt to be a positive issue in a time of recession and negative forecasts of national economic performance. Because of the importance of the planned site reorganisation to Southern Water's future operation at Worthing, the Borough Council are invited to support the application and the proposals for the improvements to facilities at Southern House."*

4. CONSULTATIONS

The Highway Authority comments that West Sussex County Council (WSCC) have undertaken pre application discussions with regards to this proposal and advice has been given in regards of the measures to be included within the Travel Plan. It is also noted that advice was provided in respects of an application back in 2006 that sought retrospective permission to increase the existing car park by 100 spaces. Comments made in regards of that application raised concerns regarding the extension of the car park in effect promoting the use of the private car rather than promoting the use of sustainable transport and that the proposal was consequently in opposition to

sustainable transport policies. It would seem that the use of the area proposed for the previous car park extension application has in any case been used for parking for the past 4-5 years and it may now be viewed as lawful development, which is a matter for consideration by the Planning Authority.

Taking account of the current proposal, presuming the car park extension is considered as lawful, the proposal seeks relatively minor alterations to the existing car park areas to increase the overall number of car parking spaces. The main driver behind this application is the operational change resulting in the need to accommodate an additional 200 staff within the existing Southern Water House (from 660 to 860). There is though to be no increase or extensions to the existing building.

In terms of details, the car parking layout is broadly acceptable but there are several substandard dimension parking spaces and aisles. This proposal seeks also the opening of a further vehicular access from Yeoman Way, which will be as an In access only. No concerns would be raised in regards of this, and the works would require the permission of the WSCC Area Engineer in order to undertake. The main vehicular access from Yeoman Road would also appear to be retained for two way visitor movements but as an In entrance only for staff. The only exit from the staff car park is therefore onto Yeoman Way. From a practical point of view, is the width of the exit sufficient to enable a delivery/refuse vehicle to exit the site via this means? Also, is there adequate stacking space provided at the retained In only access from Yeoman Road as queuing vehicles waiting to enter the site at this access may spill back onto Yeoman Road.

The submitted Travel Plan has been reviewed by the WSCC Business Travelwise Adviser and the following points should be addressed before this Travel Plan can be approved:

- Contact details for the Travel Plan Co-ordinator (TPC) should be included. If the TPC is yet to be identified then a commitment should be included to provide this office with contact details before the new parking spaces are brought in to use.

- Section 6.1 describes the overall commuting patterns observed at Southern Water's offices across the south. These patterns are likely to change when employees from the Falmer office relocate to Durrington. A survey to establish how Falmer employees might access the Durrington site may help to inform the Travel Plan.

- Section 7.3 and 7.4 briefly describe public transport provision in the local area and how this might be promoted (including the possibility of subsidised fares). Specific details about the measures that will form part of the Travel Plan (e.g. provision of route maps and timetable information, interest free loans etc) should be included. (N.B. whilst salary sacrifice schemes are available for bus ticket purchases, for tax reasons it may not be possible to purchase train tickets in this way).

- Section 7.5 states that a car sharing scheme would be introduced, but does not explain what format this would take (in-house database, bespoke website, membership of www.westsussexcarshare.com etc). The County Council has established www.westsussexcarshare.com to facilitate car sharing by those living or working in the county. The public website is free to use; however employers can purchase private groups where access can be restricted to staff only. Further information can be obtained from this office.

A free emergency ride home facility and preferential parking should be made available to employees that car share. The number of car sharing spaces that will be provided should be stated in the Travel Plan.

- It is unclear whether the measures outlined in section 7.7 will be implemented in the Travel Plan, or whether this is simply an ideas list. Some of the measures (e.g. Car Club) may have practical limitations.

- The site location map at Appendix A is useful, however future revisions would benefit from:
    - The inclusion of local bus route information and fare information (e.g. from Goring and Durrington Stations)
    - Inclusion of walking time and distance information from local bus stops and rail stations
    - Information about journey planning websites such as Transport Direct
    - Information about on-site parking restrictions
    - Placement of public transport information at the top of the page and directions for drivers at the bottom

- As a Transport Assessment is required for this development, our draft Travel Plan Policy requires that TRICS UK SAM monitoring will be required in order to independently monitor the performance of the Travel Plan. Given that existing overflow parking to be formalised but no additional parking is to be provided, car travel will be restrained to a degree. TRICS SAM monitoring would, however, provide additional confidence that any staff parking in local roads will be picked-up. (N.B. only 17% of employees responded to the 2007 staff travel survey, which is a low response rate)

- Travel Plan targets need to be **SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound). Our draft Travel Plan Policy requires that Travel Plans at new development sites should achieve a 15% reduction in the 12-hour weekday vehicle trip rate within 5 years of occupation, when compared the expected trip rate forecast by the TRICS database.

It is acknowledged that there may be a lack of data relating to call centres in the TRICS database, which in turn means that it will not be possible to set a trip rate target. The following actions are therefore proposed, which will enable a trip rate target to be set:

- Initial TRICS SAM survey within 6 months of occupation (i.e. transfer of staff from Falmer site)
- Use of the above to set a maximum vehicle trip rate target for the site (e.g. the vehicle trip rate should not be greater than identified in this initial TRICS SAM survey at year 5)
- Second TRICS SAM survey at year 3 to check that the vehicle trip rate has not worsened (and prompt remedial action if it has).
- Final TRICS SAM survey at year 5.

West Sussex County Council's draft Travel Plan policy would normally require that TRICS SAM surveys be undertaken on an annual basis, however, as no additional parking spaces are to be provided in this case, surveys are not required in years 2 or 4. This will allow funding that would have been allocated to monitoring to be invested in Travel Plan measures.

The driver behind this application is understood with there being a number of additional staff employed on the site. However further information is required in support and amendments required to the draft travel plan submitted in support of this proposal.

Further to these comments, discussion has been undertaken between WSCC and Southern Water. Southern Water have been advised that viewed against the DfT guidance as more than 100 new parking spaces are being provided, a TA would typically be sought. However, the Highway Authority is mindful of the existing use and the number of resultant vehicle movements, as well as the reasons behind the current application, and the possibility that the 200 additional staff would be accommodated at Southern House without necessarily needing planning permission. On that basis a Transport Statement and Travel Plan is now sought in connection with this proposal. The main emphasis is being focussed upon the Travel Plan. However, to set up a system of targets and monitoring to reduce the number of vehicle movements to the site, and to encourage increased use of walking, cycling and passenger transport, the Highway Authority is of the understanding that a Transport Statement/Travel Plan will be provided in the very near future. The Highway Authority has also sent some suggested wording for a condition to the applicants to secure the Travel Plan.

Discussions are ongoing but subject to the Transport Statement and Travel Plan being agreed, or at least elements of the Transport Statement secured via condition, then there would be no objection.

The following wording for such a condition is suggested:-

"Within three months from the granting of planning permission, the Applicant shall submit to the Planning Authority, in consultation with the Highway Authority, a Travel Plan completed in accordance with current Department for Transport Guidance. The Travel Plan shall include details of the monitoring framework and set targets to reduce personal motorised vehicular trips amongst staff. Once approved the Travel Plan shall be implemented and the results of the agreed monitoring provided to the Highway Authority at intervals as specified within the approved document.

Reason - to encourage less dependence upon the use of the private car and encourage the increased use of walking, cycling and the use of passenger transport amongst staff."

The Executive Head of Health, Housing and Community Safety raises no objections.

The Environment Agency's full comments are awaited but raise no objection in principle to the proposal as submitted but would wish the following to be taken into consideration:

Planning Informative

The site incorporates/is bounded by the Ferring Rife, a main river under the jurisdiction of the Environment Agency. Under Section 109 of the Water Resources Act 1991 and/or Byelaws, any works whatsoever in, over, or under the channel of this watercourse on its banks within 8 metres from the top of the channel would require the prior consent of the Environment Agency.

Pollution Prevention

Prior to being discharged into any watercourse, surface water sewer or soakaway system, all surface water drainage from parking areas and hardstandings should be passed through an oil interceptor with an overall capacity compatible with the site being drained.

The Strategic Planning and Regeneration Manager comments are awaited and Members will be updated at the meeting.

The County Ecologist comments that he is surprised and disappointed that the application has been submitted without an ecological assessment of the affected bank (alongside the Rife) and a mitigation plan. The application has not been supported by all the requisite ecological information therefore more information is required to make a suitable determination (DPO 1995).

It is reasonable to assume that protected reptiles are resident on the bank alongside the Rife. In accordance with ODPM Circ. 05/2006 paragraphs 98 & 99 surveys relating to legally protected species must support the application (also refer to PPS9 paragraphs 15 & 16). PPS9 paragraph 16 concludes that "Planning authorities should refuse permission where harm to the species *[legally protected or of conservation concern]* or their habitats would result unless the need for, and benefits of, the development clearly outweigh that harm".

Development of the bank without due regard to biodiversity would also run counter to South East Plan policy NRM5 resulting in a further degradation of the Borough's habitat matrix/network and a reduction in the habitat value of the rife with no corresponding compensation (PPS9 paragraph 12).

As stated earlier, because no ecological report has been submitted it is impossible to assess the impact of the development and the effectiveness of any proposed mitigation indeed, because of this the development may also be counter to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

He understands that there are some economic pressures driving these proposals that are important to the borough nonetheless, development cannot be permitted that will result in demonstrable harm. However, given the exceptional circumstances, the economic priorities, the stage of the application and the ecological potential of the site itself and trying to be as fair as possible to all parties but keeping 'in accordance' with ODPM circ. 06/2005 para 99 and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and in addition to the rife improvement condition) a condition for an Ecological Clerk of Works to be present to oversee the clearance operations may be appropriate on the understanding that the applicant is clear that they proceed 'at risk'.

The applicant is advised that should protected species be present work must stop; the consultant ecologist will make a judgement of the most appropriate course of action based on the significance of any find and Natural England may have to be informed. A licence may be required from Natural England before works can re-commence; Natural England and the consultant ecologist will advise. Please be aware that to continue with clearance to the detriment of known protected species may become a criminal matter.

Condition

No development or preparatory works affecting the bank alongside Ferring Rife to be undertaken until a suitably qualified Ecological Clerk of Works has been commissioned to undertake a scoping survey of the site to inform the bank clearance works that will be carried out only under the strict supervision of the Ecological Clerk of Works.

Reason: To safeguard legally protected species, other notable species and habitats

He also recommends a suitable condition to secure compensatory habit enhancement elsewhere:

Condition

Prior to the commencement of construction, a Ferring Rife ecological improvement plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To mitigate loss of habitat forming part of the Ferring Rife wildlife corridor

Informative:-

The applicant is advised that should protected species be present work must stop; the consultant ecologist will make a judgement of the most appropriate

course of action based on the significance of any find and Natural England may have to be informed. A licence may be required from Natural England before works can re-commence; Natural England & the consultant ecologist will advise. Please be aware that to continue with clearance to the detriment of known protected species may become a criminal matter.

5. REPRESENTATIONS

At the time of writing representations from Land and Brand New Homes, 81 Yeoman Gate; Natwest and Royal Bank of Scotland; Shoal Ltd, Unit C1 Yeoman Gate; and Worthing Astronomical Society have been received raising the following concerns:-

i) Great concern if any further pressure is applied to the exit and entrance in Yeoman Road. In peak times, there are queues along its length endeavouring to exit, notwithstanding the pressure on the ambulance station for their own ambulances to return.

ii) We wish to object in the strongest possible terms as the proposal will produce a total gridlock of traffic in Yeoman Way which is already a nightmare between 4:30 and 5:30pm each day. You already have the Equiniti car park with some 500 cars disgorging onto Yeoman Way which makes exiting the units in Yeoman Gate a nightmare at all busy times. Under your proposal you will be routing all the Southern Water cars, of which there are a considerable number, which at the moment exit direct on to Yeoman Road into this already congested bottleneck. This will cause a total gridlock. Every Unit holder in Yeoman Gate would feel the same way; have they been notified of the proposal? If carried through this will destroy the commercial value of our present site which at present offers acceptable access to clients and staff and there would be a strong possibility that all the employers based in Yeoman Gate would consider leaving the site. We trust that the proposal will be amended to leave the Southern Water exit unchanged from the present.

iii) As occupier of Unit A2 Yeoman Gate we have inspected the application and are writing to you to express our concerns. We believe the proposed re-location of the main staff vehicular entrance to Southern Water's Southern House offices existing car park from Yeoman Road to Yeoman Way, plus the creation of a second 'overspill' staff entrance on Yeoman Way (directly adjacent to our office) could potentially cause significant access issues during peak morning and evening rush hours. Being located as we are at the north-east of Yeoman Gate we are only too aware of the issues created by parking shortages, mainly from Equiniti, but also with regard to our own needs. The "chicane" at Yeoman Way adjacent to our building has insufficient parking restrictions. Although the Highways Agency and Police have been informed they are unwilling to restrict parking further on the basis it will merely move the problem into residential areas surrounding the offices. Larger vehicles (refuse collections and delivery vehicles for example) often have great difficulty negotiating this area. This development, as a result of staffing changes at Southern Water, will

only exaggerate the problems. The access into the second entrance, adjacent to our premises, will be difficult and we would suggest you view this for yourselves, it being worse towards the start of the week and in the mornings. Creating something in the region of 1,000 additional daily 'barrier controlled' vehicle movements to and from Southern Water's offices via Yeoman Way could severely impede vehicular access for those drivers who either work at or visit the adjacent Yeoman Gate business park.

There is currently no other vehicular access to Yeoman Gate other than via Yeoman Way. This is already hampered by vehicles parked on the roadway and the rush hour traffic flow created by Equiniti which is often significant, not to mention their own overflow.

We entirely appreciate the need to support local employers in the town but in considering this application the access issues, and parking restrictions and needs, in Yeoman Way should be reviewed and addressed in regard to not only this application but also as a result of not being appropriately dealt with or appreciated in previous developments (Yeoman Gate for example) and changes in others factors over time (Equiniti staffing levels for example). The need for a solution at the junction of Yeoman Way/Yeoman Road is essential be it through a roundabout or by the restriction of right turns out of and into Yeoman Way, and probably Southern Water's existing access as well.

We are aware of planning restrictions governing the number of parking spaces available, Yeoman Gate itself having to abide by and be a victim of these. However, as we all know, we cannot influence and control how our staff travel to work and these spaces must be provided. It is essential though that as planners you are provided with honest information and that you consider the reality of these outcomes. Will 100 further spaces be adequate? Probably not so the wider impact of this scheme and, as I have mentioned, the evolution of past schemes has to be recognised for the benefit of, and impact to, the locality.

iv) Concerns over light spillage and night sky light pollution from car park lighting and require safeguards.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

The main issues raised by this proposal are:-

- The principle of intensifying office use and implications for local economy.
- Scale and form of car parking proposed and alterations to access and implications for sustainable and safe travel and road network
- Impact on the amenities and functioning of neighbouring businesses and residents.
- Quality of design and impact on the character of the area.
- Environment impacts including impact on wildlife, surface water drainage and flood risk.

As such, the application should be principally assessed against saved Worthing Local Plan Policies RES7, BE1, TR9 and H18 and South East Plan policies SP3; SP4; CC1; CC2; CC3; CC4; CC6; CC7; RE3; RE5; T2; T4; T5; NRM4;NRM5; C5; SCT1; and SCT3, and Government Policy in Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development, Planning Policy Statement 9:Bio-Diversity and Geological Conservation: Development and Flood Risk and PPG13: Transport is also particularly relevant.

The principle of intensifying office use and implications for local economy

Although no physical works to the office building are involved, clearly the consolidation and intensification of the Southern Water's offices is the motivating force behind the current application. Southern Water is a long established and major local employer, of prime importance to the local economy. Its decision to consolidate several sub-regional offices at the West Durrington headquarters is a significant boost for the town during the recession and helps offset recent closures of large offices by a number of businesses. The additional 200 jobs created from a transfer of functions will raise local spending power and incomes and raise the profile of the town. Making more efficient use of existing office space to accommodate the additional staff is a sound use of resources.

Scale and form of car parking proposed and alterations to access and implications for sustainable and safe travel and road network

The reconfigured parking and access measures proposed are critical to facilitating the employment expansion at the site.

The 101 additional car parking spaces proposed in the application represents a substantial increase. In normal circumstances, this scale of increase would be considered excessive for the size of the offices and contrary to Government and Development Plan sustainable parking/transport policy (maximum parking standards for such B1 office uses are one space for 30 square metres of floorspace whilst the proposal results in a nominal increase to one parking space per 13.8 square metres floorspace).

However, there are special considerations. Of prime importance is the fact that some 200 staff from other offices are to be relocated to the site without any additional increase in office floorspace. This raises employment density to unusually high levels (from 10.29 square metres floorspace per worker to 8.1 square metres per worker, roughly half to a third of typical densities). Parking levels, accordingly, need to reflect these circumstances.

At the same time, however, measures in line with sustainable transport policy are necessary to ensure parking demand at the site is restrained and managed to the necessary minimum (to avoid undue pressure on the network and minimise carbon emissions) and also does not exceed on-site parking supply (to avoid over spilling onto adjacent streets). The Highway Authority did raise initial concerns over the potential impact on the network of higher traffic levels but have agreed that any concerns here may be addressed as

part of the submitted Green Travel Plan and allied Transport Statement. Negotiations with the Highway Authority to fine-tune the Green Travel Plan and ensure it has the necessary scope and enforceable controls are advanced and are expected to be concluded shortly. This should include measures to correlate the use of parking areas with staffing levels. The Committee will be updated at the Meeting.

Looking at the proposed additional parking provision itself, it appears the large section by the western boundary, which provides at least 75 spaces, may have been in use for several years and the application simply seeks to retrospectively regularise this. Some, at least, may even be able to lay claim to lawfulness by virtue of the length of time they have been established. Certainly, such parking appears to have operated without harm to neighbouring properties or the road network, although it has allowed an unsustainable pattern of commuting to develop for current employment densities. This adds weight to the proposal.

As part of the scheme, the rationalisation of the existing parking, generally, allows more efficient use of the site. However, a substantial area of new parking on the grassy bank adjacent to the Ferring Rife is still proposed. In transport terms, this may still be justified to service the more intensive office use but potential harm to wildlife is an issue and this, together with a possible way forward is considered below.

In terms of the operation of the rationalised/increased parking areas and revised access arrangements, the Highway Authority has raised no objections. The arrangements appear to be sensible and justified, making fuller use of existing vehicle accesses which may even improve the traffic situation at the roundabout.

Impact on the amenities and functioning of neighbouring businesses and residents

The physical works to the car park required for by the rationalisation of existing parking and even the new parking area, new cycle parking and smoking shelter are relatively modest and remote from residential neighbours. It would be appropriate, however, to enhance the current meagre boundary landscaping adjacent to the units in Yeoman Gate to serve as a screen and soften the edge of the site with its large amount of parking. This may be secured by condition.

Quality of design and impact on the character of the area

The car park is large and dominates the curtilage of the site, despite the landscaping and central lake. However, it is at the rear of the building and is, for the most part, screened by boundary planting and broken up by integral landscaping. The works do not significantly alter the character and appearance of the curtilage area and though some landscaping is removed to optimise parking, some compensatory planting is also provided and the grass-creted areas help soften the appearance. The smoking shelter is discreetly sited and of a basic but acceptable design.

Environmental impacts including impact on wildlife, surface water drainage and flood risk

The chief concern here is the potential impact on protected and unprotected wildlife of the proposed new parking area and internal circulation road (and adjacent lighting column) proposed on a large section of the grassy northern bank of the land adjacent to Ferring Rife (next to Littlehampton Road).

This parking is a feature unique to the current application and unfortunately no ecological survey was submitted with the application as might be expected and encouraged in Government and Development Plan policy (not to mention prescriptions under wildlife legislation) to establish its wildlife value, in advance. Unfortunately, it is too late in the season to undertake such a survey now and any such survey would need to wait till until Spring 2010 at the earliest.

The applicants understood the area to have little prospect of wildlife value as the river bank is maintained grassland and believed the main ecological value of Ferring Rife to be in other nearby sections, at the very least, the more natural wooded area immediately to the south of Ferring Rife, opposite the site . The Environment Agency appears to lend some support to this view.

However, the County Ecologist has raised concerns that, despite appearances, there are records of protected species (reptiles) nearby and there is the real prospect of some such wildlife interest being harboured on the site. Unjustified works which harm a protected species or its habitat may be in contravention of Wildlife legislation. The Council's recently prepared Biodiversity Desktop Report also indicates other wildlife interest in Ferring Rife and there is a designated Site of Nature Conservation Importance in the Arun District, though the section of Ferring Rife in Worthing is unprotected by any such designations.

Negotiations to try and find a way forward which protects any important wildlife whilst facilitating, as far as possible, the car parking extension which is understood to be important to the office relocation, are ongoing.

The favoured option of Officers at this time is that put forward by the County Ecologist in response to offers by the applicants of compensatory habitat enhancement elsewhere (and supported by the Environment Agency). This would result in the works being subject to monitoring by an appointed Ecological Clerk of Works who would have the power to stop the works if it became apparent that protected wildlife was present. Depending on the value of any wildlife found, it could be translocated elsewhere to a safe haven or works stopped and the site protected. Allied to this, a scheme of habitat enhancement elsewhere in Ferring Rife would be agreed by the Council (in conjunction with the County Ecologist) funded and implemented by the applicants to compensate for loss of the current habitat. This is subject to such measures being feasible. The alternatives would appear to be simply to omit this part of the proposed car parking area from the application, carry out an ecological survey in the spring and review the situation then. In any event,

the light column in the new car park area, closest to the remaining unaffected area of Ferring Rife will need to be resited to avoid it harming the remaining habitat.

The grassy bank area appears to have been left undeveloped in the original planning permission as part of landscaping and drainage measures. The Environment Agency's comments on the impact on drainage here and more generally within the site are awaited, but it should be noted that the regularised parking area and the new parking area are to be grass-creted. This is a porous material and allows for natural drainage.

7. CONCLUSION

This is a proposal to facilitate the consolidation and more intensive occupation of the offices at Southern House by rationalizing and expanding car parking and rearranging access. The boost to the local economy is recognised and welcomed. Whilst the levels of parking would, in other circumstances, be excessive, they are justified in this instance by the high density of employment brought about by the consolidation of employment subject to the imposition of a suitable Green Travel Plan. No significant impacts on the road network are expected and no harm to neighbouring uses is anticipated despite the objections. The works do not harm the appearance of the site. There are concerns over the potential to impact upon protected wildlife from building a car park next to Ferring Rife but a suitable way forward has now been agreed based on a watching brief and a compensatory habitat enhancement elsewhere. Subject to suitable conditions, the application should be supported.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.
2. Landscaping details to be agreed including enhancement of boundary planting adjacent to the north and western boundaries.
3. Details and positions of external lighting to be agreed.
4. Green Travel Plan to be agreed.
5. Surface Water Drainage.
6. No development or preparatory works affecting the bank alongside Ferring Rife to be undertaken until a suitably qualified Ecological Clerk of Works has been commissioned to undertake a scoping survey of the site to inform the bank clearance works that will be carried out only under the strict supervision of the Ecological Clerk of Works. No works shall be carried out other than as approved by the said Ecological Clerk of Works. All measures directed by the Ecological Clerk of Works shall be carried out as instructed and in the event of the said Clerk determining that there would be unacceptable prejudicial harm to any

protected wildlife the works shall cease and the land restored in accordance with the Clerk of Works instructions.

7. Within six months of the date of this planning permission, a Ferring Rife ecological improvement plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall be implemented, maintained and monitored in accordance with the improvement plan and allied timetable.
8. Boundary treatment.
9. Within six months of the date of this planning permission a Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority which controls the levels of available car parking on-site and regulates the number according to staffing levels at the premises at the time (as measured by numbers of full or equivalent staff), such that, if staffing levels fall significantly, the amount of parking provided on-site shall be reduced correspondingly in a manner as set out in the Management Plan. The agreed Management Plan shall be implemented fully and maintained thereafter, with appropriate reviews.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Observations of the Highway Authority
Observations of the Environment Agency
Observations of the Executive Head of Health, Housing and Community Safety
Observations of the Strategic Planning and Regeneration Manager
Observations of the County Ecologist
Letters of Representation from Members of the Public

17th November 2009