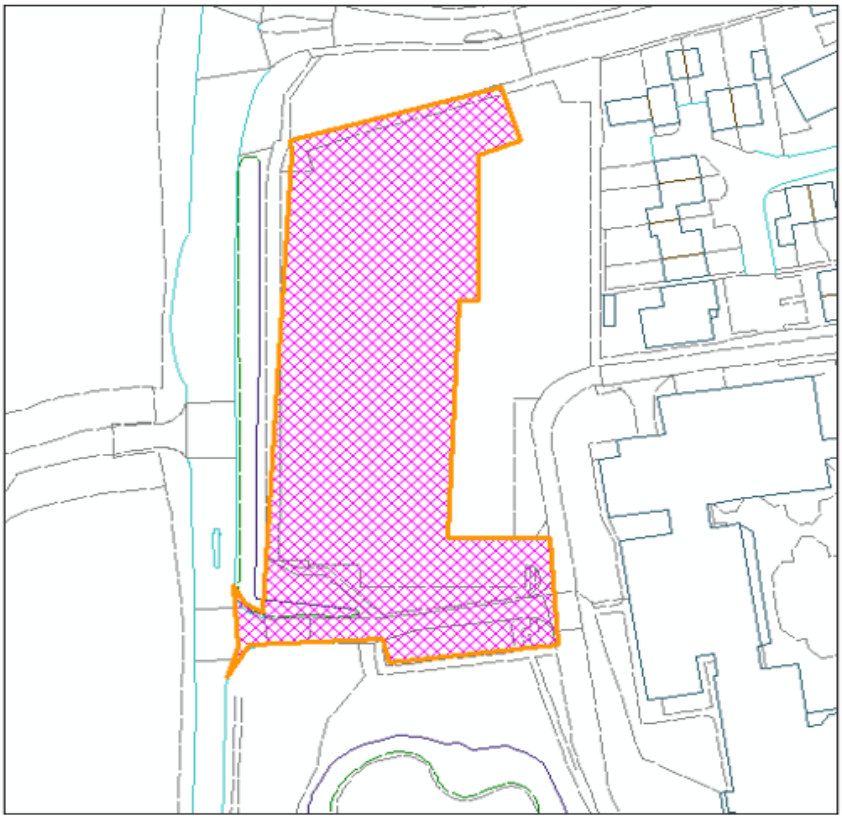
Application Number:	**AWDM/0068/25**	**Recommendation - APPROVE Subject to the satisfactory comments of the Environmental Health Officer**
Site:	**Greater Brighton Metropolitan College Littlehampton Road Worthing BN12 6NU**	
Proposal:	**Continued use of car park as bus depot (incorporating college car parking during the day); erection of replacement modular building along southern boundary for drivers booking-in, daytime site supervisors and toilet/welfare facilities plus formation of dedicated washdown facility.**	
Applicant:	**Mr Chris Chatfield Compass Travel (Sussex) Ltd**	**Ward: Northbrook**
Agent:	**Mr Wayne Gander**	
Case Officer:	**Jo Morin**	



Not to Scale

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Site, Surroundings and Proposal

The application site forms the western half of the Greater Brighton Metropolitan College car park located on the west side of the main college campus buildings.

The site has been in use since 2022 as a bus depot by Compass Travel, with shared use for College car parking during the day. [The eastern half of the car park is used solely for College car parking.] There are a number of modular buildings located at the southern end of the main gated/fenced compound comprising a supervisor's office, driver's booking-in office and toilets, plus timber cleaner's sheds, 'Ad-Blu' storage container and covered cycle rack in the far SW corner. The proposed site layout plan is on the following page

Access to the bus depot is from Titnore Lane via a pre-existing junction (formerly an emergency access serving the College) onto a short service road. The service road provides access to the main fence compound to the north and a row of parking spaces on its south side. The College and all car parks associated with the College (including the shared use of the application site) are accessed from Littlehampton Road via Nightingale Avenue further to the east.

A 2 metre high timber acoustic fence forms the eastern boundary of the depot. It runs north-south with an opening at the far northern end to allow for cars used for day-time College parking to enter and leave the site via the eastern half of the College car park. At its southern end, the acoustic fencing dog-legs eastward to enclose the driver's booking-in office and toilets before wrapping around the SE corner of the compound fronting the service road.

Wiremesh fencing is in place at the eastern end of the service road preventing access to the College car park(s) from Titnore Lane. Wiremesh fencing encloses the southern end of the compound, with metal palisade gates at the entrance. Wiremesh fencing also encloses the bank of parking spaces on the south side of the service road, and continues on the north side of the service road along the western boundary of the compound.

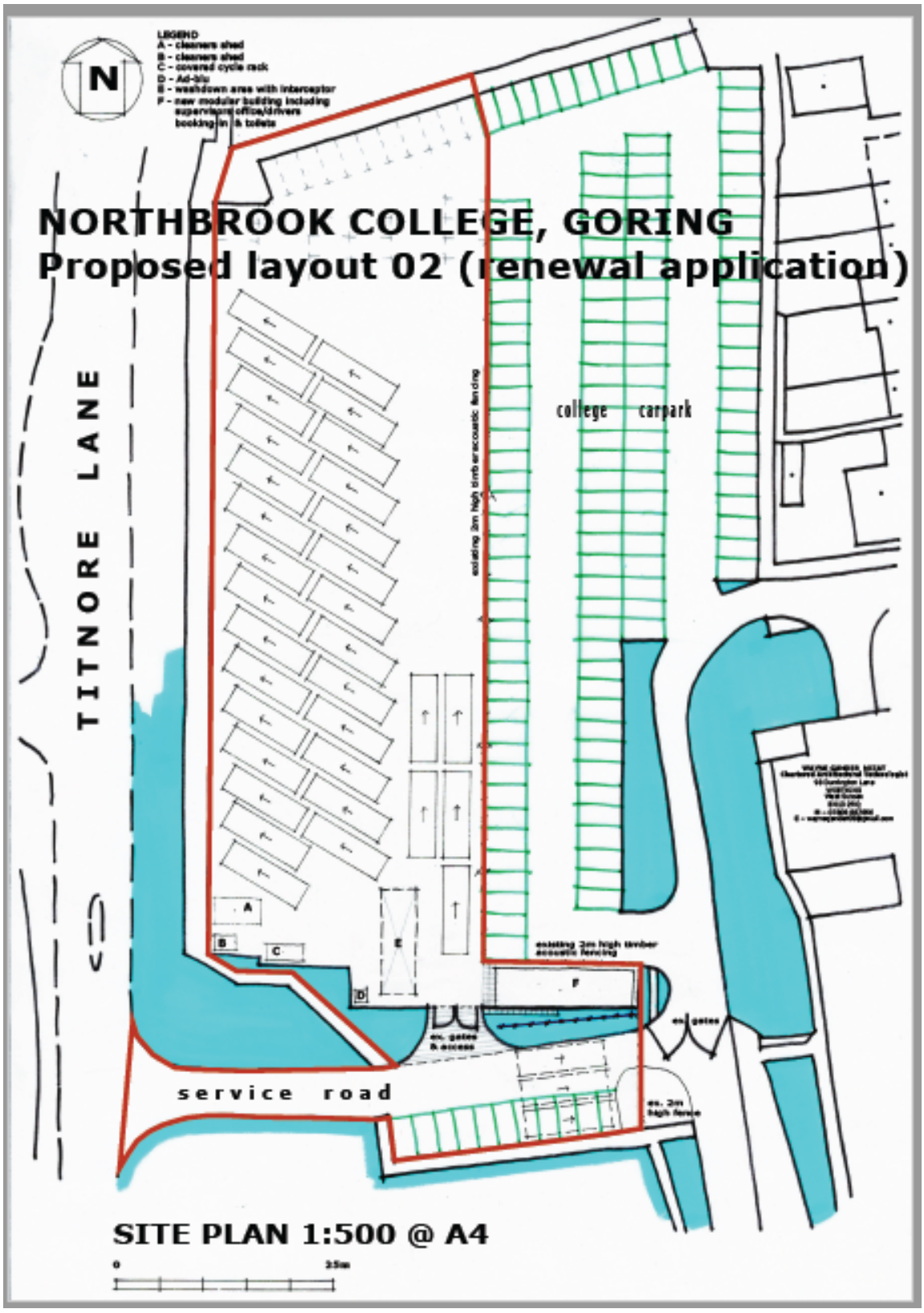
There is a mature landscaped margin between the west side of the depot and Titnore Lane with a tarmac footpath running directly alongside the fenced compound boundary (east of the landscaped margin). The footpath links from Littlehampton Road through the College campus and the west side of the depot to St Barnabas Hospice, which lies to the north of the site.

To the east of the site (beyond the eastern half of the College car park) are residential dwellings in Red Kite Way (accessed from Nightingale Avenue).

South Downs National Park lies to the west of Titnore Lane.

Full planning permission is sought for permanent use of the site as a bus depot. In addition, it is proposed to replace the existing driver's booking-in office, supervisor's office and toilets with a new modular building (accommodating an office, driver's amenity/restroom and toilet facilities) with a dedicated washdown area including interceptor created at the southern end the depot to the west side of the entrance

gates. The bus-washing would be carried out by a mobile ‘Speedy Wash’ 626EZ high-speed washing unit. An image is further below in this report



Legend: A = Cleaners Shed, **B** = Cleaners Shed, **C** = Covered Cycle Rack, **D** = Ad Blu, **E** = Washdown Area with Drainage Interceptor, **F** = New Modular Building Including Supervisor’s Officer/Driver’s Booking-In & Toilets

The application is accompanied by a Supporting Statement summarised as follows: -

Compass Travel previously had a depot facility in Faraday Close, Durrington which they occupied by lease for 10 years. The landlord, Tesco pensions fund, gave short notice for Compass to quit the site in February 2022. At such short notice the business initially relocated to the former HMRC offices in Barrington Road for a period of 6 months before having to vacate once again due to redevelopment of the site. Compass, in full knowledge of the planning authority, relocated to the Northbrook College carpark…..…...This culminated in a planning application being submitted in April 2022 and approved in Feb 2024.

At the time of that original submission it was intended to locate all staff and facilities to Northbrook College, this included a building for drivers booking-in, main admin staff offices as well as workshop and maintenance buildings. Out of necessity to keep the business effectively functioning Compass were able to relocate their office admin staff to off-site serviced offices in St Dunstan's Road, West Worthing, and all maintenance is now carried out in their Lewes depot. There is no longer a requirement for main admin staff offices or a workshop at Northbrook College.

In addition a southern vehicular access point [has been] *formed in the service road off Titnore Lane giving direct access and egress to the site from the southern end of the site. There is no longer any need for buses to pass at the rear of the residential properties in the NE corner of the carpark. Furthermore a 2m high acoustic fence* [has been] *erected through the middle of the carpark to cut down on any potential noise of vehicle movements.*

These works were all carried out within 3 months of the consent [AWDM/1444/22] *being granted and all have proved to be successful with a vast improvement for the way the site was operationally set up at the beginning.*

The current application is also supported by a Noise Impact Assessment (Acoustic SE, J3773 Issue 1).

A programme of Air Quality Monitoring over a period of 3 months (27th March 2025 to 27th June 2025) has been undertaken by Redmore Environmental Ltd in support of the current application and the results submitted to the Council (1st July 2025, Ref: 5051-3).

Relevant Planning History

AWDM/1444/22: Temporary planning permission (part retrospective) was granted in February 2024 for change of use of the site to a bus depot (incorporating college car parking during the day) and erection of an ancillary building and associated facilities adjacent to the southern boundary of the site and the erection of a 2 metre fence separating the bus depot from the remainder of the car park.

The permission was subject to a number of conditions controlling various aspects of the use including vehicle movements and hours of use, including: -

03. Within 3 months of the date of this permission the new southern access point shall be installed and the 2 metre screen fence erected. Thereafter, the use of

the site shall be strictly in accordance with the revised site plan (evening) v5 with all buses accessing and egressing from the site via the southern access.

04. All bus movements should be in accordance with the revised site plan (evening) v5 to avoid movements adjacent to residential properties in Red Kite Way, with movements in accordance with the 4th Issue Noise Assessment report.

05. No bus movements shall be undertaken on the site other than between the hours of 05:45 hrs - 20:30 hrs on each day and from Monday to Saturdays other than in cases of urgent maintenance issues (as condition 6) or in exceptional circumstances for instance; where buses have to provide replacement cover for other operators (for instance Rail Operators) or in connection with private hire.

06. The site shall be closed between the hours of 2300 and 0500 other than in connection with any administrative work or cleaning within the modular building.

07. No repairs to buses shall be undertaken on the site unless minor mechanical and electrical work (including tyre repairs/replacements) to keep the fleet safe and operational. Such works shall only be undertaken between the hours of 0800 and 2200 hours other than when urgent repairs are required to keep the fleet operational.

12. No external jet washing of buses between the hours of 2100 hours and 0900 hours on any day.

14. Within 3 months of the date of this permission all buses shall be altered to have white noise reversing bleepers and no buses shall operate thereafter with a tonal reversing bleeper.

Other conditions sought further details to be submitted for approval within 3 months of the date of the permission, including:-

08. The operation of the site shall be in accordance with a noise management plan which should be submitted to and approved in writing with the LPA within 3 months of the date of this decision. The Management Plan shall provide details of management controls to ensure the use of the site in accordance with the approved 4th Issue Noise Assessment report and the use shall thereafter be undertaken in accordance with the approved management plan.

13. Within 3 months of the date of this permission any jet washing facilities shall be provided with an acoustically designed cabinet with details first submitted to and approved by the LPA. Thereafter, any external washing of buses shall be undertaken using the jet washer contained within the approved cabinet.

16. *Within 3 months of the date of this permission a Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan once approved shall thereafter be implemented as specified within the approved document. The Travel Plan shall be completed in accordance*

with the latest guidance and good practice documentation as published by the Department for Transport or as advised by the Highway Authority.

17. *Within 3 months of the date of this decision notice a Operational Management Plan (OMP) as described within the submitted Transport Report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority setting out how the routing of traffic associated with the proposal is controlled and include the following matters:*

- *Bus and staff operational details*
- *Bus and staff parking details and manoeuvring*
- *Operation and management of gated access*
- *Mechanism to limit and control use of the access*
- *Directional controls and limitation placed on bus drivers*
- *Reporting and monitoring mechanism.*

Once approved the use shall always be undertaken in accordance with the approved OMP.

An application (AWDM/0709/24) for approval of details reserved by conditions 8 (Noise Management Plan), 16 (Travel Plan) and 17 (Operation Management Plan) was permitted in May 2025.

The initial application AWDM/0709/24 also sought to discharge Condition 13 but this was subsequently withdrawn as the 'Karcher' power-washer currently in use does not include an acoustic cabinet, and therefore Condition 13 could not strictly be complied with without amendment to the wording of the condition.

The temporary permission (AWDM/1444/22) lapsed at the end of January 2025.

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: The Local Highway Authority has raised no objection, commenting: -

"WSCC in its role as Local Highway Authority (LHA) has been consulted on the above proposals for highway safety and capacity considerations on the above stated proposals. The temporary planning consent relating to the 2022 application lapsed on the 30th January 2025. The supporting statement suggests there is no longer a requirement for main admin offices or a workshop at Northbrook College. In addition, a southern vehicular access point was formed in the service road no longer has any need for buses to pass at the rear of the residential properties in the NE corner of the carpark. The LHA acknowledges that current temporary permission use has been in existence for some time. We are not aware of any adverse comments that may have been made by the LHA, or of any other highway related concerns with this site and the current use. Therefore, it is not envisaged there being any significant highway issues to this use continuing."

Adur & Worthing Councils:

The ***Environmental Health Officer*** initially commented: 'No adverse comments for this application.'

Following submission of the latest Noise Impact Assessment (J3773 Issue 1) the EHO further commented: "*The findings show that noise from the bus depot is creating no significant loss of amenity to the nearby residential property. The BS4142 assessment for the bus washing system confirmed what I initially suspected that it would not be an issue."*

The Environmental Health Officer has liaised with the Applicant's Air Quality Consultant to agree the scope of the real-time air quality monitoring at the site and final comments are awaited following receipt of the Final Report (Ref: 5051-3r1) on 2 July 2025.

Southern Water:

Connection to Public Sewer
Southern Water will require a formal application for a connection to the public sewer to be made by the applicant or developer.

We request that should this planning application receive planning approval, the following Informative is attached to the consent: "*Construction of the development shall not commence until details of the proposed means of foul sewerage and surface water disposal have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Southern Water."*

Disposal of Surface Water
In situations where surface water is being considered for discharge to our network, we require the below hierarchy for surface water to be followed which is reflected in part H3 of the Building Regulations. Whilst reuse does not strictly form part of this hierarchy, Southern Water would encourage the consideration of reuse for new developments: -
- Reuse
- Infiltration
- Watercourse
- Storm Sewer
- Combined Sewer.

We would like to engage with you on the design for disposal of surface water for this development at the earliest opportunity and we recommend that civil engineers and landscape architects work together with Southern Water. In many cases this may negate or reduce the need for network reinforcement and allow earlier completion of the development. Where a surface water connection to the foul or combined sewer is being considered, this should be agreed by the Lead Local Flood Authority, in consultation with Southern Water.

WSP: The Council's drainage consultant has raised no objection, commenting: -

"The applicant is applying for the continued use of the car park as bus depot (incorporating college car parking during the day); erection of replacement modular building along southern boundary for drivers booking-in, daytime site supervisors and toilet/welfare facilities plus formation of dedicated washdown facility. Following a

review of the submitted information, we have no objection on surface water grounds. Due to the site, size, location, and type of development we would recommend the approval of the application."

Representations

14 representations have been received raising concerns including from the occupiers of 10, 14, 17, 29 Red Kite Way, 3, 14 Nightingale Avenue, 4, 12, 32, 41 Skylark Rise, 28, 36 Robin Road, which have been summarised as follows: -

- The siting of a bus dept so close to residential homes is inherently inappropriate and poses significant concerns; we urge that alternative sites are explored that would be more suitable. The site is being transformed from an education site to a commercial transport hub which conflicts with local planning policies and zoning restrictions; alternative site feasibility should be assessed before final approval.
- The installed acoustic fencing has proved ineffective in mitigating the noise generated by the buses. It has made little to no difference in the sound levels experienced daily. The noise from the buses, particularly during the early morning is unbearable and disrupts the peace and tranquility of the neighbourhood. The early morning noise, even in the Winter when windows are closed, has resulted in sleep disruption to our family, and is even more pronounced in the Summer. The incessant idling of buses makes it nearly impossible to retain sleep causing ongoing fatigue and stress.
- It is clear that the noise of engine-idling and vehicle movements are disturbing sleep and disrupting the peaceful nature of this residential area, affecting the well-being of those that live nearby particularly children, the elderly and those working shifts.
- The residents of the Yeoman Chase estate will be subjected to so much dirt and noise if this continues. It will be impossible to open our windows in the Summer.
- The operational hours are supposed to begin at 5.45am but there have been numerous instances of buses starting up well before this time. Whilst we have received apologies upon lodging complaints it is unacceptable that neighbours are left to monitor compliance.
- Although measures have been put in place to keep the buses away from nearby houses we have had to complain to Compass Travel about buses entering the College parking side of the car park and turning around near the houses which is in breach of the agreement reached with pollution entering my child's bedroom as a result. If this is happening during the trial period I can only worry about what will happen if granted permanent permission.
- Concerned about particulate matter pollution in the local neighbourhood.
- Having a bus depot a few metres from our house is not environmentally friendly when we have children playing outside most of the time.
- I suffer from asthma and a family member is unwell; I am concerned about air quality along the A259. The bus depot will make air quality a lot worse and directly affect us.
- There has been a noticeable decline in air quality with residents reporting an increase in fumes and emissions which can lead to respiratory issues and also affect local wildlife and bird populations. This is completely inappropriate in an area where families live and surrounding green spaces should be protected.

- Strongly object on grounds of unacceptable air quality impacts and public health risks. The PM2.5 pollution levels in Northbrook and the wider Worthing area already exceed the UK's legal limit of 20 µg/m³, with recent readings reaching 41.4 µg/m³-more than double the UK legal threshold and eight times the WHO recommended limit. Any further deterioration in air quality poses a significant health risk to residents, particularly children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing conditions such as asthma and cardiovascular disease. Despite this, there appears to be no comprehensive air quality impact assessment available for public review, and an Environmental Health Officer's response merely stating "no adverse EH comments" is inadequate given the severity of the existing pollution levels. A full independent air quality impact assessment should be conducted before any decision is made. The Council provides full transparency on how this proposal aligns with the UK's legal air quality obligations and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The application should be refused unless it can be demonstrated beyond doubt that it will not further deteriorate air quality in an area already exceeding legal pollution limits. Should this application be approved without proper consideration of air quality risks, I reserve the right to escalate the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman, the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP), and, if necessary, through legal challenge.
- Insufficient parking left for the College. With Northbrook College undergoing expansion following the recently approved planning application AWDM/0447/24 we are concerned about the potential overflow of vehicles onto the Yeoman Chase estate, exacerbating existing parking issues, with additional parking needed for the extra staff and students. The bus depot's footprint has already taken over significant parking areas and added pressure from college-related traffic could lead to further congestion and inconvenience to local residents. The roads surrounding the College are part of the Yeoman Chase, a private estate, and are not available for parking other than for residents and their guests.
- Concerned about congestion at the entrance to the Yeoman Chase estate. The local road network is experiencing increased congestion and parking pressure due and further reduction of College parking for the bus depot will exacerbate this. A new Traffic Impact Assessment and Road safety Assessment should be sought factoring in the cumulative effects of the current application and AWDM/0447/24.
- Titnore Lane could again be used as the exit from the College putting less traffic onto Nightingale Avenue and helping the residents of Yeoman Chase.
- Worried about traffic on Titnore Lane which is already busy. Buses pulling out onto Titnore Lane pose a risk to pedestrians, cyclists and other road users especially in the morning when visibility is lower. Residents have witnessed several near misses. It is only a matter of time before an accident happens.
- I am concerned about the effect of the bus traffic on air quality in this residential area, not to mention an educational site and adjoining the South Downs National Park.
- Concerned about the proposed bus wash which is not something we have had on site and is untested.
- What has the Council done since the temporary permission was granted? What measuring has taken place of the pollution and traffic impacts of the development? The answer is none. It is just hoped that everyone will forget

about it. I objected before on legitimate grounds that were ignored. This is not an appropriate place for a bus depot. Shame on you Worthing Council.
- The site has become an eyesore with visible signs of spills and environmental degradation. Clear risk of environmental contamination due to fuel and oil leaks which could have long-term effects on local soil and water systems.
- The proposal places additional strain on local services and infrastructure, including drainage capacity and public services. Infrastructure improvements should be sought by a developer contribution through a S106 Obligation.
- This location adjoining a residential area was never intended to be used as a depot and is not equipped to manage the environmental and traffic impact of such a high-intensity transport operation. A more appropriate location should be sought that does not negatively affect residents' quality of life.
- Has any consideration been given to the impacts on the hospice next door to this site?
- Concerned the proximity of the depot will affect property value. [This is not a valid planning matter that can be taken into consideration.] Potential buyers may be deterred by noise and disturbances making it difficult to sell out home.
- A public consultation process should be mandated prior to any expansion.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2024)
National Planning Practice Guidance (MHCLG)
Worthing Local Plan 2020-2036:
SP1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS1 Spatial Strategy
DM5 Quality of the Built Environment
DM8 Planning for Sustainable Communities/Community Facilities
DM15 Sustainable Transport & Active Travel
DM16 Sustainable Design
DM18 Biodiversity
DM20 Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage
DM22 Pollution

Relevant Legislation

The Committee should consider the planning application in accordance with:

Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides that the application may be granted either unconditionally or subject to relevant conditions, or refused. Regard shall be given to relevant development plan policies, any relevant local finance considerations, and other material considerations

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that requires the decision to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In addition, section 1A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 require that 'in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land' in National

Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, relevant authorities 'shall have regard' to their purposes.

The Environment Act 1995 revised the original 1949 legislation and set out two statutory purposes for national parks in England and Wales:

- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage
- Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks by the public.

When national parks carry out these purposes they also have the duty to: Seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the national parks. This duty is particularly important to the delivery of the statutory purposes of protected areas. The duty applies to all local planning authorities, not just national park authorities. The duty is relevant in considering development proposals that are situated outside National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty boundaries, but which might have an impact on the setting of, and implementation of, the statutory purposes of these protected areas.

Planning Assessment

The key considerations in this case are:

- The principle of development
- Traffic and access implications on the local highway network and the impact of the use on parking provision available for the College
- The impact of the development on the amenity of local residents
- The visual impact of the development (including on the National Park)
- Biodiversity
- Sustainability.

Principle of Development

The site lies within the designated 'built up' area as identified in the adopted Local Plan 2023 and forms part of the Greater Brighton Metropolitan College campus grounds.

The NPPF (paragraph 98) encourages local planning policies to guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs. Policies should help to ensure that facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable.

In recognising that there is limited space within Worthing for new development and that there is great pressure on *all* available land, the Local Plan seeks to protect existing community facilities. To this end, policy DM8(e) states that development that would result in the loss of community facilities will normally be resisted and will only be permitted where: -
(i) an accessible replacement facility of a similar nature is provided that meets the needs of its current and intended users, as well as the local community, or

(ii) it can be demonstrated that the existing premises are no longer required or viable in their current use and the premises have been appropriately marketed for an alternative community use.

In this case the land in question forms part of the College car park and this use will not be entirely lost since the site will continue to be available for College car parking during the day-time (as at present) when the buses are out.

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Nevertheless, the College is planning to rationalise its current facilities in Worthing by closing its Broadwater campus. From September 2025 courses previously offered at Broadwater will be taught either from the West Durrington campus or Worthing College (also part of the Chichester College Group). However, the College is satisfied that the continued use of part of the car park as a bus depot will not affect future education plans at the site and have provided the following statement (dated November 2024) from the Chief Operating Officer in support of the proposal: -

"I am writing in relation to the planning application from Compass Travel for the use of part of the car park at Northbrook College's West Durrington campus.

The current arrangements for co-location at the site have now been in place for an extended period and we feel they have been effectively and sensitively developed and are operating effectively.

To summarise, Compass uses a small area of the car park during the day when the College is operational with students on the site, and a larger area overnight when the College is closed (and therefore not using the car park). The arrangements have been developed to minimise the impact on neighbouring properties and to manage the co-location and logistics of the operation on site. i

The College currently has relatively significant excess parking capacity on site based on student numbers and travel patterns in the 2024/25 academic year.

As part of consolidation plans ahead of the 2025/26 academic year the College will close its Broadwater campus with part of the provision currently taking place there transferring to the West Durrington site. A new Construction Trades Building (currently being built) will house part of the relocated provision. We have assessed the impact of this development on our parking arrangements and are confident that there will be sufficient capacity for the additional students studying on the site. It should be noted that a larger proportion of the students transferring to the site will be aged 16-18 and will not travel by their own car.

The College is also continuing to develop its sustainability and carbon reduction strategy, which will include initiatives intended to reduce individual vehicle use for travelling to the site. A key aspect of this is to ensure that there is a good local bus service, of which Compass is a significant part.

We therefore feel that the continuing arrangements with Compass will not impact on the College's current and future plans for education on the West Durrington campus and that there will continue to be sufficient parking capacity on the site. On this basis we are happy to support the planning application submitted by Compass."

The Local Plan recognises the importance of supporting sustainable transport and active travel and Policy DM15 seeks to promote and support the expansion and improvement of public transport services.

The NPPF (paragraph 85) states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. That existing employment land and sites within the Borough are in both high demand and under threat from other uses is also recognised in the Local Plan and highlighted by policies which seek to protect existing employment land and uses.

Members will be aware that Compass Travel has been seeking to find a permanent site for many years having been moved on from its previous site at Faraday Close following the decision of the freeholder to sell the site.

As far back as 2018 Compass Travel met with the Council's (then) Director of Economy, Martin Randall, to highlight the difficulty in finding suitable sites and to ask for the Council's help, but no sites have been suggested.

At the time of the grant of temporary permission under AWDM/1444/22, Compass Travel were requested by Committee members to continue seeking commercial agents' advice for alternative locations. Compass Travel has contacted the following commercial agents Vail Williams, Stiles Harold Williams, Michael Jones, Brierley & Co, and Justice and Co. To date no other suitable sites have been found.

The following alternative sites have been considered and rejected as unsuitable: -

- Angmering Station Car Park: Too small, proximity to residential dwellings;
- Arundel Station Car Park: Too small, congested access from A27 onto/existing site;
- The Vinery, Poling: Not large enough, issues with buses accessing A27;
- Salbsteins Warehouse, Brougham Road, Worthing: Planning application refused (WB/02/01216/FULL);
- West Worthing Station Car Park: Not large enough;
- Churchill Industrial Estate, Lancing: No appropriate sites available;
- Ford Airfield: Access issues and operationally too far away;
- Woods Way Industrial Estate, Goring: No available sites large enough;
- East Worthing Industrial Estate: No available sites large enough;
- Decoy Farm, Dominion Way, East Worthing: Adjacent to amenity tip, redevelopment for industrial starter units by WBC (AWDM/1745/22).
- Riverside Industrial Estate, Littlehampton: No suitable sites;
- New Courtwick Lane, Littlehampton: Buildings with no external parking;
- Teville Gate, Worthing: Not available. Programmed for redevelopment;
- Union Place, Worthing: Not available due to imminent redevelopment (AWDM/1618/23 amended by AWDM/1072/24).

It is worth pointing out that some of the Compass Travel business operations have been successfully relocated, for example, the administration function which is currently based at Pilgrim House, St Dunstans Road, and vehicle maintenance which is carried out at the Lewes Depot. However, for operational reasons the business requires a base in Worthing, with many bus contracts and routes extending from Worthing. Compass Travel, has a heritage as a Worthing-based business, having recently

celebrated its 30th anniversary. It is a significant local employer in the town with 160+ full and part-time staff. Even a short move to Littlehampton or Shoreham would risk losing staff and not being willing or able to travel to work.

The Applicant states that the bus depot needs to be central to the demographic it serves. The Compass Travel depot in Lewes serves East Sussex and a further depot at Dunsfold serves Surrey. Moreover, it is argued that the existing depot at West Durrington offers clear locational benefits with excellent access to all major road networks including A259, A27 and A24 whereas a more central location in the town would be likely to present more operational difficulties with up to 40 buses leaving and returning to the site at the beginning and end of each day during peak times.

The NPPF requires that planning decisions should promote an effective use of land, with substantial weight given to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, whilst safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions (paragraphs 124-125). Taking into consideration the continued efforts taken by Compass Travel but lack of any success in finding a suitable alternative site, together with the operational benefits offered by the current location, and the fact that a significant proportion of the site will continue to be shared and used for day-time parking by the College; subject to addressing other policies of the adopted Local Plan, it is considered the continued use of the site as a depot can be supported in principle.

Visual amenity

The existing modular buildings at the southern end of the fenced depot are not substantially taller than the timber acoustic fence in situ, and so only the top parts are visible from the neighbouring car park and adjacent parts of the College campus. These modular buildings are visible from the upper floor windows of the nearest houses and flats in Red Kite Way, although the buildings are not directly to the rear of these properties, being sited some 50+ metres to the south and west of the nearest residential property. The (overnight) parked buses are visible from the upper floor windows of properties in Red Kite Way, but at a minimum separation distance of 30 metres (comprising the width of the retained College car park between the depot and the residential boundary).

The buildings and parked buses are visible through the wire mesh fencing from the footpath adjoining the western side of the depot and in angled views from the site entrance in Titnore Lane, but are effectively screened by the mature landscaped margin on either side of the site entrance.

It is proposed to consolidate the 3 existing buildings into a single larger modular unit (16m long by 4.2m wide and 3.3m high) in the far SE corner. It will have a similar appearance to the existing buildings with the external walls finished in a light grey/white colour plastisol steel with anthracite corner and fascia trims. The building would have a utilitarian appearance but, as at present, would be largely screened from views from the east and southeast by the existing acoustic fencing, and from the west and southwest by the landscaped margin bordering Titnore Lane.

Notwithstanding their utilitarian/functional appearance it is considered the visual impact of the bus dept and associated modular and small-scale storage buildings in

this location would not be so harmful to local character or the street scene to warrant refusal on visual amenity grounds.

The visual impact of the use and associated single-storey modular buildings/stores on the setting of the South Downs National Park is negligible.

Residential amenity

As indicated by the representations received objecting to the continued use of the site as a bus depot the main concern is the impact of the use on the amenities of neighbouring residents with residents stating they continue to be disturbed at early hours of the morning by the movement of buses and engine-idling.

The existing layout of the bus depot derives from amendments to the earlier (part retrospective) application AWDM/1444/22 following negotiations to address similar concerns raised by nearby residents at that time.

The amendments involved the creation of the new access (now in situ) at the southern end of the compound meaning that buses would no longer need to pass close to properties in Red Kite Way; and changes to the orientation of the bus parking layout, resulting in buses facing east (i.e. with their engines furthest away from sensitive noise receptors) and a 2 metre high acoustic fence along the eastern edge of the depot site. Proposals for a workshop and offices were also removed from the application.

An updated Noise Impact Assessment (Issue 4 dated 07.03.2023) based on noise measurements undertaken at the site (as it operated in 2023) and modelled for the revised layout was submitted in support of the amended application AWDM/1444/22. It concluded that the revised layout would ensure that adverse impacts on local residents would be unlikely given that noise from early morning movements would not exceed existing background noise levels (primarily traffic on the Littlehampton Road) and setting out mitigation measures relating to bus orientation, reversing alarms, minimising bus idling and engine revving.

The application was subsequently approved subject to a condition requiring the submission (and agreement) of a Noise Management Plan setting out management controls and mitigation measures to minimise the impacts of the development on the nearest noise sensitive receptors.

A Noise Management Plan (NMP) was subsequently submitted and approved under AWDM/0709/24 in consultation with the Environmental Health Officer. This includes the following:

- Buses to be parked with engines facing east
- Reversing alarms using white noise only
- Bus idling only when preparing for departure and doing mandatory checking
- Access/egress only via southern entrance
- Staff informed of need to avoid noise from shouting and use of radio & phones, reinforced by site signage to respect neighbours
- External cleaning of buses during specific hours
- A complaints process to be operated by Compass Travel

- Reviewing of the NMP on a minimum 12-month frequency to check efficacy including any management of any operational changes

The Applicant has also undertaken a further Noise Impact Assessment based on noise surveys undertaken between January and June 2024 at the site (Acoustic SE J3773 Issue 1) which can be compared with previous surveys undertaken prior to the bus depot use commencing on the site.

The latest assessment concludes that the average LAeq sound pressure levels reaching the nearest noise sensitive receptors in Red Kite Way from Compass Travel's current operation in comparison with when they were not present sees changes in sound pressure level ranging from 0 - 2dB. On the basis that the lowest detectable change in sound pressure level by a human is 3dB, the assessment concludes that these differences are negligible and would not have an adverse impact on residents. The conclusion further comments that given the context of the site being close to an active carpark and close to a busy road network, the noise sensitive receptors are exposed to extraneous sound sources which are often significantly louder than that of the Compass Travel operations.

The conclusions of the latest Noise Impact Assessment (July 2024) are supported by the Council's Environmental Health Officer.

A further condition of the planning permission AWDM/1444/22 required the Applicant to set up regular liaison meetings with local residents to address areas of concern about the use. The Applicant has confirmed that liaison meetings were arranged in advance by email (where email addresses had been provided to Compass Travel by local residents) to take place at 6pm at a neutral venue (the College refectory) with the Managing Director of Compass Travel giving out his own email address and contact phone number for residents who could not attend or had concerns to raise in-between meetings. Residents liaison meetings subsequently took place as follows: -

- 20th September 2023: attended by 2 local residents.
- 18th October 2023: No residents attended but apologies received from 3 neighbours.
- 15th November 2023: No residents attended but apologies received from a local councillor. An email enquiry was received about: (i) a storage container located in the NE corner of the site - confirmed as belonging to the College, and (ii) safety measures at the junction of the footpath adjacent to the compound entrance - subsequent works undertaken to improve lighting, gates at the crossing, painting the pedestrian crossing, new safety fencing and cutting back of overhanging trees.

No meetings held in December 2023 or January 2024.

- 22nd February 2024: No residents attended. An email enquiry was received querying if (i) any landscaping would be happening, (ii) clarification of hours of use, (iii) if workshop buildings were to be built at the north end of the site - it was confirmed that this would not be happening.
- 21st March 2024: No residents attended.
- 18th May 2024: No residents attended.

The Applicant states that no further meetings were planned due to lack of residents attending.

It is acknowledged that the nearest residents will be aware of the operation of the bus depot and that its continued use will have some impact on the residential amenities of these occupiers. However, the Environmental Health Officer has raised no objection to the current application, including the proposed use of the 'Speedy Wash' mobile unit for bus washing (image below taken from internet), being satisfied that the controls and management measures already in place and set out in the agreed Noise Management Plan (between 9am and 9pm) are sufficient to mitigate the most harmful impacts of the development.



Air Quality

An Air Quality Assessment was submitted in support of the previous application AWDM/1444/22 based on modelling to determine the baseline conditions and air quality impacts of the development as a result of vehicles travelling to and from the site and within the depot. Impacts on annual mean concentrations of NO2, PM10 and PM2.5 were predicted to be 'negligible' and air quality impacts as a result of the development were considered to be 'not significant' as a result.

However, in response to concerns raised in representations from nearby residents about the current bus depot use impacting existing air pollution levels, a 3-month programme of Air Quality Monitoring was agreed (from 27th March to 27th June 2025) with the monitoring position and methodology agreed by the Council's Environmental Health Officer (Team Leader) to allow measurements to be taken and quantification of the following pollutants:

- NO2 (Nitrogen Dioxide)
- PM10 and PM2.5 (Particulate Matter).

The monitor was installed on the north-eastern boundary of the wider car park, adjacent to the closest residential properties to the site. These are located downwind of the depot with respect to prevailing meteorological conditions and at a distance of approximately 35 metres.

The Air Quality Standards Regulations (2010) and subsequent amendments include Air Quality Limit Values (AQLVs) for NO2, PM10 and PM2.5 (amongst others). The AQLV for PM2.5 was amended in the Environment (Miscellaneous Amendments) (EU Exit) Regulations (2020).

The Air Quality Strategy (AQS) was produced by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and published on 28th April 2023. The document contains standards, objectives and measures for improving ambient air quality, including a number of Air Quality Objectives (AQOs). These are maximum ambient pollutant concentrations that are not to be exceeded either without exception or with a permitted number of exceedances over a specified timescale. These are generally in line with the AQLVs, although the requirements for the determination of compliance vary.

The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 was published in January 2023, providing long term and Interim Targets in order to reduce population exposure to PM2.5. The Concentration Target for 2040 was subsequently adopted in the Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations (2023).

A summary of the results of the 3-months monitoring is provided in the table below: -

Pollutant	Air Quality Objective/Interim Target/Concentration Target Annual Mean Concentration (µg/m³)	Annualised Measured Concentration (µg/m³)
NO2	40	28.93
PM10	40	9.06
PM2.5	12 (Interim Target by end of Jan 2028) 10 (Concentration Target by 2040)	6.94

The monitoring results indicate that NO2, PM10 and PM2.5 concentrations are all below the relevant AQOs and Concentration Targets. The findings of the Air Quality Assessment indicate that air quality impacts as a result of the operation of the development are considered ‘not significant’ in accordance with IAQM guidance.

The comments of the Council’s Environmental Health Officer on the report findings and conclusion are awaited and the Committee will be updated.

Accessibility and parking

The bus depot is accessed from Titnore Lane via a short service road. This arrangement was approved under AWDM/1444/22 supported by a Transport Statement and Stage 1 Road Safety Audit.

The Transport Statement explains that up to 48 buses are stored at the site, with the majority of buses leaving before 07.15hrs and returning between 16.32hrs and 19.39hrs from Monday to Saturday with fewer buses used on a Sunday. The buses are parked in a tight configuration on a 'last in - first out' basis to minimise reversing manoeuvres.

Bus drivers arrive at the site in their own vehicles and initially park in the row of parking spaces on the south side of the service road. Only when this row is full are drivers directed to park within the fenced compound on the east side (adjoining the acoustic fence).

Based on a worst case scenario, the Transport Statement calculated an absolute maximum of 140 additional vehicle movements per day (including drivers arriving/departing and buses arriving/departing the site) with the busiest operational hour between 06.00hrs and 07.00hrs.

An Operational Management Plan (V.3 issued 25.03.2025) ('the OMP') setting out the details of the site access arrangements/manoeuvres and an onsite vehicle operational plan as required by Condition 17 of AWDM/1444/22) has since been permitted under AWDM/0709/24 in consultation with the Local Highway Authority.

There is no permitted access to the College campus from Titnore Lane. All vehicle traffic and parking associated with the College accesses and egresses the campus from Littlehampton Road (via Nightingale Avenue). Signage is also used to control flow of buses within the site (not in the college car park, which is behind Red Kite Way), and to ensure that the bus-only access is not used by other vehicles. There is overlap with the provision of the OMP and the approved Travel Plan of 2024, which refers to the presence of site supervisors to manage parking by buses and, during the daytime, by users of the college; additional supervisors are on hand at the start of new terms to ensure that new students are made aware of these arrangements.

The Transport Statement submitted for AWDM/01444/22 identified the pre- existing College car park had a maximum capacity of 301 spaces. Parking surveys undertaken to support that application identified that 205 cars were parked at the busiest time leaving a spare capacity of 96 spaces. The subsequently approved site plan shows 131 spaces retained (on the east side of the acoustic fence) for sole use by the College, with the parking spaces on the west side (comprising the development site) 'shared' between the bus depot and the College.

This arrangement is on the basis that the buses are parked overnight at the site but leave early in the morning allowing the freed-up spaces to be used for College parking during the day (accessed at the northern end from the retained College car park through an opening in the acoustic fencing). That said, not all of the parking spaces on the development site are available for 'shared' use, with some buses retained on the site during the day (as a contingency) and other parking spaces used during the day for drivers' parking.

Residents have raised concerns about the cumulative impact of parking spaces lost as a result of the bus depot use and the likelihood of increased parking demand arising from the expansion of educational facilities at the College resulting in increased parking pressures on nearby residential roads in the Yeoman Chase estate. The Transport Statement submitted in support of the construction trades building currently under construction (AWDM/0447/24) made it clear that the proposal would provide improved facilities for existing staff and students and did not involve any uplift in student or staff numbers.

However, in their latest statement the College has since confirmed that with the closure of the Broadwater campus the new Construction Trades Building will house part of the re-located provision. However, the Statement goes on to state that having assessed the impact of this development on current parking arrangements the College is confident that there will be sufficient parking capacity for the additional students studying on the site.

The planning permission AWDM/0447/24 is subject to a planning condition requiring measures within the approved Travel Plan (subsequently approved under reference AWDM/0709/24), to be implemented on first occupation and subsequently monitored, reported and revised as necessary.

In conclusion, the bus depot has been operational at the site for some 3 years and the Local Highway Authority has raised no concerns about how it is operating or identified any adverse impacts arising from the proposed permanent use on the local road network.

Sustainability

It is understood that Compass buses run on diesel and have yet to convert to more greener forms of fuel. However, as a form of public transport buses are an inherently sustainable form of transport resulting in less vehicle numbers on the road overall, and providing an affordable means of transport, particularly for the elderly.

Policy DM16 requires new non domestic buildings to achieve a 27% reduction in CO2 on average per building compared to the Building Regulations Part L (2013) standard. No details have been provided of the proposed heating system for the new modular building (although drawings show a/c units on the west side elevation facing the site entrance). The submission of details to demonstrate compliance with policy DM16 can be secured as a condition of planning permission.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The BNG Statement submitted with the application outlines that as the development proposal relates to the use of an existing car park, a fully sealed surface, with the proposed new modular building (and retained existing buildings) also sited on the sealed surface, it meets the ‘de minimis exemption’ set out in national BNG legislation.

That said, there are opportunities for providing enhanced biodiversity by re-planting the grassed verges on either side of the gated entrance to the compound (from the

service road) with native tree/shrub species that would support indigenous wildlife and would be in keeping with the spirit of DM18 which requires all development to provide a minimum 10% net gain for biodiversity.

Conclusion

Whilst this is not a straightforward case, the amendments to the operational layout, noise mitigation and management measures brought into effect following the grant of the temporary planning permission (AWDM/1444/22) have undoubtedly minimised the impact of the bus depot use on the amenities of the nearest residential properties. The Applicant has sought to engage with residents during the course of the temporary permission in order that any issues arising from the operation of the depot can be highlighted, and where possible quickly addressed.

During the course of this application the Applicant has undertaken an Air Quality Assessment using on-site monitoring over a 3-month period in response to concerns raised by local residents in relation to air quality. Whilst this indicates that the operation is well within air quality targets, the Environmental Health Officer comments are awaited.

It is recognised that there continues to be some impact on the amenities of nearby residents who are aware of daily bus movements and activity, particularly early in the morning when the buses are leaving the site.

However, with the measures in place and secured as conditions of planning permission officers consider that this impact is outweighed by the sustainable transport benefits provided to the wider community in supporting a local, long-established public transport operator, together with the operational benefits of this site in relation to the local highway network, the efficient 'shared' use of existing brownfield land with day-time parking continuing to be provided for the neighbouring College, as well as the lack of alternative suitable sites within the wider area..

Recommendation

APPROVE Subject to the satisfactory comments of the Environmental Health Officer on the report findings of the Air Quality Assessment: -

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Approved Plans

2. No works to implement the wash-down area shall commence unless and until details of the proposed means of foul sewerage and surface water disposal have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Southern Water.

3. No bus movements shall be undertaken on the site other than between the hours of 05:45 hrs - 20:30 hrs on each day and from Monday to Saturdays other than in cases of urgent maintenance issues (as condition 5) or in exceptional circumstances for instance; where buses have to provide replacement cover for other operators (for instance Rail Operators) or in connection with private hire.

4. The site shall be closed between the hours of 2300 and 0500 other than in connection with any administrative work or cleaning within the approved modular office/welfare building.

5. No repairs to buses shall be undertaken on the site unless the repairs entail minor mechanical and electrical work (including tyre repairs/replacements) to keep the fleet safe and operational. Such works shall only be undertaken between the hours of 0800 and 2200 hours other than when urgent repairs are required to keep the fleet operational.

6. The operation of the site shall be undertaken at all times in accordance with the approved Noise Management Plan J3773 Issue 2 Dated 28.03.2024.

7. Within 3 months of the date of this permission details of proposed landscaping shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the approved landscaping shall be implemented within the next planting season.

8. No external washing of buses shall take place between the hours of 2100 and the following 0900 on any day.

9. The use hereby permitted shall be operated at all times in accordance with the measures outlined in the approved Travel Plan TP/CNM/040924 V.3 dated 10.10.2024.

10. The site shall continue to be available for day-time parking by the neighbouring Greater Brighton Metropolitan College and such use shall be accessed/egressed solely from the adjoining College car park and site entrance from Littlehampton Road.

11. The use hereby permitted shall be operated at all times in accordance with the approved Operational Management Plan V.3 dated 25.03.2025.

12. Works to implement the replacement office/welfare building hereby permitted shall not commence unless design-stage details of the sustainability measures demonstrating that the building will achieve a 27% reduction in CO2 on average per building compared to the Building Regulations Part L (2013) standard have been submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority. On completion of the building an independent verification report shall be submitted to the local planning authority demonstrating compliance with the agreed measures.