Travel Plan

Walnut Hill Nursery, Walnut Hill Road, Istead Rise, Kent, DA13 9HL

Submission of travel plan pursuant to condition 2 of planning permission 20250864 relating to the change of use of main frontage building to Class E(g)(i) office use

By: GRAHAM SIMPKIN PLANNING

For: First4drains

Project reference: PR4677

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office@gsplanning.uk

RTPI Chartered

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1 Introduction

1.1 The following submission has been made in connection with Walnut Hill Nursery, Walnut Hill Road, Istead Rise, Kent, DA13 9HL (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'):

Submission of travel plan pursuant to condition 2 of planning permission 20250864 relating to the change of use of main frontage building to Class E(g)(i) office use

1.2 Under reference 20250864 retrospective planning permission was granted on 16th January 2026 subject to 13 conditions. This submission relates to condition 2, which states as follows:

Within three months of the date of permission, a Travel Plan to reduce dependency on the private car shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan shall include objectives and modal-split targets, a programme of implementation and provision for monitoring, review and improvement. The Travel Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and adhered to throughout the lifetime of the development.

1.3 The reason given for the condition is as follows:

In order to reduce the reliance on the private car and to improve sustainable transport measures, in accordance with paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

2 Site Context

2.1 This Site extends to some 0.25ha within a largely square parcel of land and is situated on the north side of Walnut Hill Road, where the Site can be directly accessed. This is the Site's only access, which is protected by closeable metal gates.

2.2 The previous lawful use of the Site was as a commercial plant nursery, which ceased operations in 2022. Since then, the Site has been occupied by the Applicant's business, First4Drains, which operates as a drainage company.

2.3 A large brick building of 350 sqm occupies the front of the Site and is used as an office for administrative purposes by the 16 staff who are employed by First4Drains. There is also vehicle parking adjacent to the building for said staff. Planning permission was granted for this under reference 20250864. The approved proposed block plan is drawing 08A and includes 19 parking spaces, inclusive of 1 LGV space and 3 accessible spaces. Electric car charging facilities are a matter covered exclusively under the Building Regulations.

2.4 The brick building comprises four skylights on the principal elevation, clay tiles on the roof and porch, as well as black aluminium framed windows and black guttering and downpipes.

2.5 Beyond the main building, there is a singular outbuilding that is rectangular and is situated to the east of the Site. It is constructed from timber cladding and white UPVC windows and doors. It is understood that the building is used by the employees of the main building for storage.

2.6 The Site is directly adjacent to the former Conifers Camping and Caravanning Club to the west, whilst it is bound by woodland to the north and east, and the main road to the south.

2.7 This Site is the subject of the following planning constraints and characteristics:

- Metropolitan Green Belt
- Close to Ancient Woodland (13m due east to Walnut Wood)
- Flood Zone 1 (low possibility of flooding from rivers or the sea)

3 Planning Policy and Guidance

3.1 In the relevant authority's Development Plan, Core Strategy policy CS11 deals with development related transport issues and outlines that:

5.5.38 New developments should mitigate their impact on the highway and public transport networks as required. As appropriate, transport assessments and travel plans should be provided and implemented to ensure the delivery of travel choice and sustainable opportunities for travel. Transport assessment work is required to be undertaken in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and to identify detailed highway and public transport network requirements and management arising from the development.

5.5.39 Sufficient parking in new development will be provided in accordance with adopted parking standards which will reflect the availability of alternative means of transport and accessibility to services and facilities.

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework") is an overarching national policy document, which is used to assist planning authorities when making decisions regarding planning applications. Paragraph 118 states:

All developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed.

3.3 The NPPG advises that Travel Plans can positively contribute to:

- *encouraging sustainable travel;*
- *lessening traffic generation and its detrimental impacts;*
- *reducing carbon emissions and climate impacts;*
- *creating accessible, connected, inclusive communities;*
- *improving health outcomes and quality of life;*
- *improving road safety; and*
- *reducing the need for new development to increase existing road capacity or provide new roads.*

4 Sustainable Transport Options

Access on foot

4.1 Walnut Hill Road does not provide formal pedestrian provision or access to the site however this road is very lightly trafficked and existing properties served by it use this road as a shared surface for vehicles and pedestrians. The nearest formal footways are located at Longfield Avenue and commence approximately 450m to the west of the site. The review of the PIC accident data for Walnut Hill Road / Longfield Avenue to the west of the site access confirms that no accidents were recorded over a 5 year period which suggests that the lack of formal footway provision has not raised any recorded highway safety issues.

- Public rights of way within the locality of the Site

Access by cycle

4.2 In relation to cycle trips, the statistics published by Cycling UK for the most recent year available (2023) suggest an average cycle trip length of 3 miles which equates to 5 km. Trips by cycle will be a potential travel option for staff employed at the Site. It is located within a short cycling distance of New Barn, Hook Green and further afield settlements including Gravesend can be reached within 5 km. This is a substantial catchment. In addition, for onward travel the nearest rail station, Meopham, which is located 1.3km from the Site can be accessed by cycle well within 5 km. The Site is therefore accessible by cycle, although there are no dedicated cycle routes nearby.

Access by bus

4.3 The application site is accessible by this mode of transport with the nearest bus stops located on the A227 Wrotham Road close to its junction with Nash Bank. These stops are located approximately 750m to the east of the site which equates to a relatively short walking time of 10 minutes. The Wrotham Road stops are served by the 223, 306, 308, 416, 418, 418R and 418W bus routes with frequent services to Meopham, Sevenoaks and Gravesend. Further bus stops area available on New Barn Road 1.2km to the west of the Site which are served by the 34, 418R, 418W, NAG1 and NAG2 bus routes with frequent services operating between New Ash Green and Gravesend. The following are links to these bus routes and timetables (no ticketing information is available via the websites of the operators):

- 34 Timetable (school bus)
- 223 Timetable (school bus)
- 306 Timetable (school bus)

- 308 Timetable
- 416 Timetable (school bus)
- 418 Timetable (school bus)
- 418R Timetable (school bus from Wrotham Road or New Barn Road)
- 418W Timetable (school bus from Wrotham Road or New Barn Road)
- 489 Timetable
- M1 Timetable (school bus)
- NAG1 Timetable (school bus)
- NAG2 Timetable (school bus)

Access by rail

4.4 The nearest rail station to the site is Meopham which is accessible within a short cycle or bus journey (1.3 miles). The station is located on the Chatham Main Line with train services operated by Southeastern to London Victoria, Gillingham and Dover Priory via Canterbury East. Service frequencies are high with typically 5 trains per hour during weekday peak periods and one per hour during off-peak.

- Details and live departures from Meopham

4.5 The next nearest train station is Longfield at 2.5 miles away, which offers 2 trains per off-peak hour and to the same destinations as Meopham.

- Details and live departures from Longfield

5 Aims and Objectives

5.1 The Travel Plan is a permanent and ongoing strategy for enabling and encouraging travel by environmentally sustainable modes of transport. The aims of the travel plan are as follows:

a) To be relevant to the employees, visitors and customers of the occupiers of the offices;
b) To increase awareness of transport issues and the impact on traffic on the local environment;
c) To ensure a more sustainable car use, and reduce the number of single occupancy car journeys;
d) To support and encourage those visiting and working at the units to do so on foot, bicycle and public transport;
e) To minimise the impact of travel requirements on the environment both locally and internationally through reducing air pollution and consumption of fossil fuels;
f) To increase walking and cycling as a health benefit to employees and customers;
g) To make the management of car parking effective, efficient and equitable;
h) To support those with mobility impairments;
i) To ensure understanding and awareness of the Travel Plan;
j) To monitor the Travel Plan.

6 Targets

6.1 The Travel Plan puts forward targets to specifically reduce car use and encourage travel by all sustainable modes. The targets will be SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timebound) and set over a five-year Travel Plan monitoring period. They are also linked to the objectives of the plan. The Travel Plan adopts an overall target of reducing the number of single occupancy car trips by 10% over its lifetime when compared with the modal splits to be determined by the baseline travel survey. It also adopts an interim target of a 5% reduction in single occupancy car trips at year 3 of the plan.

6.2 The progress of the plan in meeting these targets will be assessed via the programme of multi modal travel surveys outlined in the Monitoring section of this document. In the event that targets are not met by the end of the 5 year monitoring period, this period would be extended until such time as the targets are met with additional funding and resources devoted to the Travel Plan. This would be enforced by the local planning authority.

7 Package of Measures

7.1 This section of the Travel Plan outlines the specific package of measures the will be implemented over the lifetime of the plan to discourage car use and encourage site staff to travel by more sustainable modes i.e. on foot, by cycle and using public transport.

7.2 As the development site is already occupied and operational the Travel Plan's main focus will be on management measures.

7.3 **Claire Watson** is to be appointed Travel Plan Co-ordinator (TPC) within the development who will oversee implementation, monitoring and review of the Travel Plan. Claire can be contacted via email: Claire@first4drainsltd.co.uk.

7.4 The TPC will be in place from the date that the approved Travel Plan is implemented and for the full duration of the 5-year monitoring period. The TPC name and contact details will be confirmed and supplied to the LPA upon implementation along with the names and details of any other individuals working on the Travel Plan. The TPC will dedicate the time required to fully implement the plan and ensure that the specified targets are met within the monitoring period. The TPC will have the capacity to deliver every element of the plan that has been set out. It is expected that the site operator will be responsible for implementing the Travel Plan and appointing the TPC.

7.5 The TPC will be responsible for:

- The annual review and monitoring of the property's accessibility in sustainable transport terms in accordance with the monitoring programme outlined within the Travel Plan
- The regular promotion of measures to facilitate the site accessibility in sustainable transport terms including through text being incorporated into all brochures/programmes relating to the development and into publicity material as appropriate, and by making copies of the Travel Plan available to staff
- Ongoing senior management commitment and consultation with staff at the property
- Implementing a communications strategy within the development about the benefits of the Travel Plan
- The provision of a site notice board in a prominent location within the development showing the information in the staff welcome pack. This will

include a local area map showing, walking, cycling, public transport, and local amenity information.

7.6 The TPC will also be responsible for the following measures:

- **Measures to discourage car use** – the TPC will investigate the potential for a site specific car sharing scheme for staff as a measure to reduce single occupancy car trips
- **Emission / vehicle reduction initiatives** - the TPC will explore the use of alternatively–fuelled vehicles for servicing and deliveries (such as electric and LPG vehicles and cycles). This will include exploring options for greener- fuelled vehicle grants from the Energy Saving Trust (www.est.org.uk)
- **Measures to encourage public transport use** - The TPC with provide in-house information on public transport options for travel to and from the site including details for National Rail travel information available from their website www.nationalrail.co.uk as well as the websites of the buses running locally. This information will be displayed on the site notice board provided within the development and within the welcome pack supplied to staff
- **Measures to encourage cycling** - the provision of the following measures will be implemented to encourage workplace cycling:
    - Secure and covered workplace cycle parking
    - Cycle and equipment loans and insurance
    - Puncture repair facilities
    - Information on local cycle routes via the staff welcome pack and site notice board
    - Encouragement of adult cycle training
- **Measures to encourage walking** - the TPC will encourage walking through the provision of information on safe and convenient local walking routes to public transport and local facilities via the site notice board and staff welcome pack
- **Other measures** - A Travel Plan welcome pack will be issued to all staff when commencing employment at the site. This pack will include a number of incentives to influence travel habits, which will include the following:
    - Details of all current sustainable travel modes available, including bus and rail services accessible from the site, along with maps showing local walking and cycle routes, plus details of any forthcoming promotional events for sustainable travel

- Options for discounted public transport ticketing will be explored with the relevant local operators. Details for existing discounts available for public transport tickets will also be included
- Cycling information advising on such details as how to improve cycle parking facilities at their home, information on any cycle promotions and discounts that local stores are offering and local cycling information / maps. Options for discount vouchers for redemption at local outdoor wear and / or cycle retailers will be explored for inclusion within the welcome pack
- A copy of the Travel Plan and contact details for relevant organisations that are responsible for the specified public transport options and local taxi companies.

7.7 The TPC will also promote the use of Liftshare, the membership of a car club and the use of taxis as appropriate via the welcome pack and site notice board and explore registering to join the Zero Emissions Network (ZEN). This includes a range of emission reducing measures (such as discounts on cargo bike couriers and bike subscription services) and schemes (including trials and grants for sustainable transport options).

7.8 The Travel Plan and all of the measures outlined will be fully funded by the site operator.

8 Action Plan

8.1 The action plan summarising the programme for delivering the measures outlined at section 7 of the document is set out in the table below:

Measure	Timescale	Responsibility
Provision of site notice board	Within 3 months of approved Travel Plan	Site operator
Appointment of TPC	Within 1 month of approved Travel Plan	Site operator
Implementation of Travel Plan and its measures including making copies of the Travel Plan available to staff	Within 3 months of approved Travel Plan and ongoing	TPC
Provision of staff welcome pack	Within 3 months of approved Travel Plan and ongoing	TPC
Implementing the following measures to encourage cycling: Cycle and equipment loans and insurance; Cycle repair facilities; Exploring options for discount vouchers for redemption at local outdoor wear and / or cycle retailers	Within 3 months of approved Travel Plan and ongoing	TPC
Implementing measures to encourage walking through the provision of information via the site notice board and staff welcome pack. Promoting the use of Liftshare, the membership of a car club and registering to join the Zero Emissions Network (ZEN)	Within 3 months of approved Travel Plan and ongoing	TPC
Promotion of the Travel Plan and its measures	Upon appointment of TPC and ongoing	TPC
Undertaking travel surveys	Years 1, 3 and 5	TPC
Monitoring the Travel Plan performance against targets	Upon appointment of TPC and ongoing	TPC

9 Monitoring and Review

9.1 The performance of the plan will be monitored by the TPC over a 5 year period via a programme of multi-modal travel surveys.

9.2 The travel surveys will aimed at staff employed at the site with an initial baseline survey to be undertaken upon appointment of the TPC following approval of the Travel Plan to establish the baseline modal split. All surveys will be TRICS compliant and will follow the SAM methodology for multi modal travel surveys aimed specifically at Travel Plan monitoring.

9.3 Follow up surveys will be undertaken at years 1, 3 and 5 within the monitoring period. It is envisaged that the surveys will involve a questionnaire to meet the specific requirements of the site and capture, as a minimum, data for the main mode of travel for staff. The baseline and follow up surveys for staff will have a target response rate of a minimum of 75% which will be achieved by engaging with staff and stressing the importance of the Travel Plan aims, objectives and process.

9.4 In addition, monitoring will include usage and capacity of cycle parking and a commitment to review cycle parking provision when monitoring shows that the existing provision is at 80% capacity.