

Registration Date:	25-Sep-2012	Applic. No:	P/02523/010
Officer:	Mr Smyth	Ward:	
		Applic type:	
		13 week date:	
Applicant:	Mr. Waqas Choudhery, Dawat-e-Islami		
Agent:			
Location:	Langley Village Club, 27, Cheviot Road, Slough, SL3 8LA		
Proposal:	CHANGE OF USE FROM LICENSED MEMBERS SOCIAL CLUB (SUI GENERIS) TO ISLAMIC COMMUNITY AND TEACHING CENTRE AND PLACE OF WORSHIP (CLASS D1).		

Recommendation: Refuse



1.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

1.1 This application is of a type which is normally determined in terms of the Scheme of Delegation, however the application has been called in by Ward Councillor Plimmer for determination by Planning Committee, on the following grounds:

- The planning application submitted on 25th September 2012 by Dawat-e-Islami charitable organisation is to convert the former Langley Village Club into an Islamic Community & Teaching Centre through change of use to class D1, however the planning application on the SBC website claims this is a change of use from licensed members club to Islamic community centre and place of worship. The floor plans include the conversion of the 1st floor into a dedicated prayer hall as a mosque rather than as a teaching and community centre.
- The objections from local residents in Cheviot Road, Mendip Close, Quantock Close and Grampian Way are that there are only 35 parking spaces available in the Langley Village Club site therefore where will the additional car parking be available during weekday evenings and weekends when local residents are at home with their cars parked out in the surrounding streets?
- Residents fear serious traffic congestion in Cheviot Road and surrounding roads which could occur when religious festivals such as Eid take place at the proposed place of worship.
- Friday lunchtime prayers will take place at the same time as patient appointments at the adjacent Langley Medical Centre and also parents collecting their children from the morning session and dropping off their children off for the afternoon session at the Sure Start Centre and reception classes at Foxborough Primary School which is also adjacent to the proposed site in Common Road. These prayer times between 1-2 pm on Fridays could also cause traffic congestion in the surrounding area.

1.2 Having considered the relevant Policies below and the additional information provided by the applicant, officers are of the view that the development is considered to have an adverse affect on the sustainability and the environment for the reasons set out.

1.3 Refuse planning permission for the reasons set out at the end of the report.

PART A: BACKGROUND

2.0 Proposal

2.1 The application as originally submitted was for *a change of use from licensed members social club to Islamic Community and Teaching Centre*.

The further supporting information states the planned activities to include:

- Children's education classes
- Ladies study circle, probably twice weekly
- Adult Study Classes and Tuition
- Language courses: English, Arabic, Urdu
- Counselling & advice as required for community members eg on issues of drugs, domestic, marital, family etc.
- Education for special needs and disabled members of the community.

2.2 Upon reviewing the submitted plans it was apparent that the first floor is proposed as a prayer hall. In light of this, the description of the proposal was changed to: *Change of Use from Licensed Members Social Club (Sui Generis) to Islamic Community and Teaching Centre and Place of Worship (Class D1)*. The change to the description has not been challenged by the applicant.

2.3 On the ground floor, the accommodation will comprise 2 no. classrooms, reception, committee room, entrance hall with reception toilets and store. At first floor the accommodation will comprise prayers hall, toilets, kitchen and stairs. There is no change to the second floor two bedroom flat, which is accessed via the clubhouse and is to be retained for a caretaker or project manager.

2.4 On the application form the total gross internal floorspace is shown as 305 sq m. However, it has been established that this is the footprint and not the total internal floorspace, which excluding the second floor flat equates to 610 sq m. The dimensions of the building have been verified by reference to the original planning permission.

2.5 There is existing on site car parking for 35 no. cars.

3.0 Application Site

3.1 The site comprises a two storey social club with a residential flat within the roof space. The site is served by its own car park which provides car parking for up to 35 no. cars. The building contains some full height windows although most windows are high level,

designed to minimise noise outbreak.

3.2 Adjoining the site to the north east is the Langley Health Centre and car park. To the south of the host property is a four storey block of flats, beyond which is Foxborough Primary School. To the south and west of the site is two storey terraced housing. Currently, there are no on- street parking restrictions in place within the vicinity of the site.

4.0 Site History

4.1 There is an extensive planning history for this site, but the relevant site history is set out below.

4.2 P/02523/008, Demolition of existing buildings and erection of two and four storey buildings to provide 30 flats, 11 houses and a new village club house (including stewards flat) (amended plans dated 27/05/02, , 12/07/02, 30/08/02). Approved 20-Jun-2003

4.3 P/02523/009, Installation of 2 smokers shelter canopies and a brick pillar to create additional front entrance door. Approved 17-Oct-2007

4.4 The social club was constructed following a grant of planning permission in 2003 for demolition of existing buildings and erection of two and four storey buildings to provide 30 flats, 11 houses and a new village club house. Formerly the wider site contained a larger single storey village club, car park and 2 no. large Council owned house.

5.0 Neighbour Notification

5.1 Langley Health Centre,
Headteacher, Foxborough Primary School
1 – 12, 14 – 17 Sir Robert Mews
2 – 12, 14 – 30 (even nos) Cheviot Road
19, 49 Cheviot Road
25 – 38 Mendip Close
27 – 35 Quantock Close

Letters of Objection have been received from 33, 36 Mendip Close and Site Controller's bungalow, Foxborough Primary School. An e mail has also been received named, but with no address given. The main reasons for objecting are set out below:

- Cheviot Road is very busy for parking due to Langley health centre being next door and for which parking commences at around 7.30 am and lasts through to early evening, with parking spilling over onto Cheviot Road itself, Mendip close and the club itself. This situation is aggravated by parking for

- Foxborough primary school.
- Cheviot Road is the only road into and out of the Foxborough estate and constantly busy
- A change of use to mosque will generate much more traffic than the club did.
- What provisions are there to prevent parking from the proposed mosque spilling over onto neighbouring roads, particularly on Islamic holy days and on prayer day each Friday
- Increased noise and disturbance and in particular external noise from the car park and its users and Islamic calls for prayer which could involve the use of external speakers.

5.2 In addition a petition containing 255 signatures has been submitted opposing the application. The petition comprises 200 no. standard letters of objection which have been signed on an individual basis. On the reverse side of most of these sheets, but not all, are minutes of a meeting held by the Foxborough Tenants and Residents Association, held on 8th September, to discuss three alternative uses for the Langley Club based upon the bids received. Being a standard letter, the reasons for objecting are common to all petitioners, that being on grounds of traffic and parking:

“that we are already virtually up to capacity with parking and that there are potential hazards in a number of places: the doctors surgery is open all day, queues beginning form at 0.7.30; the local primary school, just 100 metres from the surgery, has access problems; the school has special needs classes, whose pupils arrive and leave at different times between 08.45 and 16.30; the redwood House ambulance needs constant access; Cheviot Road, Mendip Close, Common Road, Eden Close, Quantock Close, Sir Roberts mews, Humber way, Raymond Road and Tamar way are frequently at capacity with parked cars and heavy congestion; large vehicles, waste-disposal lorries, coaches etc etc already frequently bring the area to a near standstill; as most of the garage sites have been – or are going to be- demolished, more and more cars and vans have been parked on the highway, with the result that you take your life in your hands when crossing the road; there is only one exit to the estate and even if a second was created, it would not solve congestion at the top of Cheviot road, a problem highlighted by Fiona Mactaggart, our member of Parliament.

It must be emphasised that this is in no way anti-Islam, but merely opposition to a potential parking problem in an area and on an estate which is creaking at the seams”

In addition a further 55 no. signatures have been collected, with a general objection to the proposal, but without any detailed reasons given. When collecting signatures information was also gathered relating to car ownership. This revealed that the 255 signatories

owned a total of 91 no. cars.

6.0 Consultation

6.1 Transport & Highways

This is a proposal to convert an existing social club into an Islamic community and teaching hall which will have a range of uses including teaching and prayers. As it has previously operated as social club, the type of use is similar in terms of transport impact and therefore in this instance I think it is reasonable not to request a travel plan, also the size of the development is below the threshold for preparing a travel plan.

The site has a 35 space car park and it is adjacent to it is the local health centre car park. There are no controls on either car park so I suspect that when either of them are not in operation some overspill parking occurs. If this was to become a problem then the respective owners /operators would need to introduce measures to prevent unauthorized use. However this is not an issue for the Local Highway Authority to resolve.

Cycle Parking will need to be implemented in accordance with the Council's adopted cycle parking standards.

No highway objection

Condition

No part of the development shall commence until details showing the provision of a secure cycle store and an unobstructed footway link to accord with the Local Planning Authority's "Cycle Parking Standards" has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No part of the development shall then be occupied until the cycle store and footway link have been laid out and constructed in accordance with the approved details and that area shall not thereafter be used for any other purpose.

Reason: To ensure that adequate and convenient cycle storage is provided to accord with Local Plan standards.

The engineers have in part revised their previous comments as follows:

I don't think I would support a highway objection to this proposal, because these are community facilities and it isn't a bad site for this type of use

Some people will definitely walk. Seek a Travel Plan plus £3k Travel Plan Monitoring fee

Response: In light of the uncertainty regarding total parking

requirements necessary to comply with the Council's approved parking standards for a D1 use, the applicant was requested to provide additional information to support their application and allow officers to consider whether or not the level of car parking is adequate to serve the proposed use. The following additional information was requested:

- *The maximum numbers of people likely to be attending the premises, particularly on prayer days and holy days.*

Applicant's Response

Maximum number of people expected is 300 on special occasion days. Please note this is the maximum and this number of people will only attend the building a few times a year.

- *Typical usage in terms of numbers of people attending the building on different days and at different times during the day.*

Applicant's Response

The building will mainly be used for education classes for adults and childrens which will start after 4.30pm, There will be a few classes in the evening, each class will consist of 15-20 people. There will be 50-60 people in the building at any one time during the week. On weekends there will be about 60-100 people in the building in the evenings.

- *An indication of the likely travel modes for visitors in terms of walking, bicycle, public transport and car provided expressed as a percentage*

Applicant's Response

We expect 90% of people to walk as this establishment is for the local residents, people from outside Langley are unlikely to come as they will probably prefer to go to the major places of worship in Slough which will be closer to them. There is a mosque in Cippenham (Bath Road), Diamond Road, Stoke Poges Lane and Chalvey (two), hence we only expect the attendance of the close surrounding areas.

- *An indication of the likely catchment area i.e. identifying those areas from in and around Slough from where the people would travel.*

Applicant's Response

As mentioned above, we only expect the local people from Langley, mainly the Foxborough ward of Langley.

- *Any evidence to support the above which can be obtained in relation to another similar facility either elsewhere in Slough*

or outside of Slough.

Applicant's Response

Also as mentioned above there are a few other establishments in Slough. However there is no such facility for the Foxborough residents. We also have a petition ready with a large number of local residents supporting the idea which we will be submitting to the council shortly.

In response to the further information provided, the transport and highway engineers have made the following further comments.

Further information has been supplied by the applicant in terms of the size of the development and the proposed use of the hall and the comments provide an updated recommendation of the proposed development.

Development Proposal

The applicant states that the building will be used:

- mainly on evenings and weekends;*
- community activities and classes will be held in the evenings and weekends after both the school and health centre will be closed;*
- Friday prayers will be between 13.00-14.00 – this will not coincide with school traffic*
- facility for local people who live in Langley (Foxborough ward) meaning that these people will not have to travel to other facilities elsewhere in the Borough*
- the applicant assumes that 90% of people will walk to the site for Friday prayers as the catchment area for the Centre will be Langley*
- Maximum number of people expected is 300 on special occasion days. Please note this is the maximum and this number of people will only attend the building a few times a year.*
- The building will mainly be used for education classes for adults and children which will start after 4.30pm. There will be a few classes in the evening, each class will consist of 15-20 people. There will be 50-60 people in the building at any one time during the week. On weekends there will be about 60-100 people in the building in the evenings.*

Assessment Against Local Plan Parking Standards

D1 places of worship require 1 space per 10m² for car parking provision, so against the gross floor area the development requires 61 spaces. However if one looks specifically at the use of each part of the building a case could be made that the hall which measures 217m², would require 22 parking spaces under the adopted parking standards. The ground floor facilities should be considered under D1 Further Education, which requires 1 space per member of staff, plus 1 space per 3 non-teaching staff, plus 1 space per 3 students. Therefore against current parking standards for this use class the level of provision meets the standards. Although the planning case

officer has advised that it would be very difficult to prevent the ground floor of the building being used for prayers as well and therefore a greater proportion of the building should be considered under the standard of 1space per 10m². In the case of this particular development, one does need to make sure that the level of parking provision can accommodate the development peaks and that if parking cannot be accommodated within the site car park then there should be facilities that provide parking without saturating the local residential streets.

Parking Concerns During Peak Periods

Following the submission of further information in relation to this application and complaints about the operation of the recently opened Islamic Centre at Westward House on Montrose Avenue, which have been made since I made my original comments, I am concerned that my initial comments may have overlooked a genuine concern that there is likely to be a shortage of parking. At the Westward House site the Council has received complaints that the area of the building being used as a prayer hall is larger than what was given permission for and as a result the building is generating a higher number of trips and greater parking demand. Whilst the applicant has re-iterated that the catchment area for the Centre is Langley, this will not stop people travelling to the site by the car. If people are travelling from work to the prayer hall on a Friday there are only a limited number of employment establishments within a short walk distance of the site; therefore the suggestion of 90 percent of centre users arriving by foot is considered unrealistic.

Another element of local concern is that there is already high demand for parking within the immediate vicinity of the site, with the patients from the adjacent Health Centre capitalizing on the empty Social Club car park and on my site visit at 10.00 on 12/12/12 the Social club car park was close to capacity. Patients are also parking in the vicinity of the health centre / social club on-street. I would suspect that any future occupier of the Social Club would seek to prevent patients from parking in their car park if it was affecting their operation. Therefore the streets around the centre will become much busier in parking terms than the existing situation now. Whilst the health centre parking issues are not a material consideration within this application I think one does need to take account of the impact of periods of high parking demand on local residents.

Consistency of Assessment in terms of Parking with other Sites

In terms of considering this application one does need to consider how other recent applications have been assessed. The most recent similar sites that have received consent are Islamic Centres at :

- 68-72 Ragstone Road – 783m² with 34 parking spaces – 1 space per 23m² - extension to site was agreed at appeal
- Westward House, 39 Montrose Avenue – 932m² with 49 car parking spaces (311m² for prayer hall) – 1 space per 19m²
- 339-345 Bath Road – 574m² with 24 car parking spaces (1 space per 24m²)
- proposed development - 610m² with 35 car parking spaces (1 space per 17m²)

Proximity to Places of Work

- Montrose Avenue - close proximity to the Slough Trading Estate, Perth Trading Estate and the businesses and shops on Farnham Road;
- 339-345 Bath Road close proximity to businesses and workplaces on the Slough Trading Estate, Bath Road Retail Park and Bath Road frontages
- Ragstone Road is within 520m of edge of Slough town centre and serves the Chalvey ward which contains a busy secondary shopping area and a number of small businesses
- proposed development is 950m from Hurricane Court development, the Harrow Centre in Langley 1.15km and Sutton lane development is 1.8km away

Proximity to Public Car Parks (Public and Private)

Whilst this was not a consideration when the other sites were considered, following their implementation it has become apparent that overspill parking does occur at public car parks in the vicinity of these sites:

- Montrose Avenue – opposite Sainsburys car park on Farnham Road;
- 339-345 Bath Road is opposite the Bath Road Retail Park car park;
- Ragstone Road site – 400m to Jubilee River public car park, 850m from Herschel multi-storey car park
- proposed site – the nearest public car parks is on Parlaunt Road 580m, 840m from Langley leisure Centre car park, and there is a Leisure Services car park at Harvey Memorial Park 440m from the site which is only operational at the weekend – use outside of this time would be subject to an agreement with SBC Leisure Services;

In terms of consistency with other applications, in terms of parking provision provided specifically for the development it has a similar number. In respect of proximity to work places there are no obvious large employers within 800m of the site (a 10 minute walk). In terms of additional car parks there are no public car parks within 400m (5 minute walk). There are some clear differences with this site to the other three sites.

Travel Plan Measures

It is unlikely that travel plan measures on their own would be

sufficient to encourage 90 percent of worshippers to travel to the site by non car means as suggested by the applicant. As no travel plan has been submitted it is difficult to be sure if any measures are to be proposed, but it would appear unlikely. The most effective measures would be to prevent worshippers from parking on-street, but this would have impacts on local residents as well and they would have to accept the implementation of a residents parking zone. This would cause some inconvenience to local residents as they would have to purchase permits to park on-street, compared to no charge now, also it would mean that their visitors would have to pay in future. The costs of implementing a scheme would be relatively high (which would be funded by the applicant through a S106 agreement) and the enforcement costs for the Council would also be high, which would not be covered by a S106 contribution. A residents parking scheme could only be implemented following public consultation and there is no guarantee that the scheme would be accepted by local residents.

Summary and Recommendation

Taking account of the further submitted information and reflecting on our approach at other sites I do not believe that the applicant has made the case for this development and whilst it is consistent with the Parking Standards assuming the hall is only 217m², a case could be made that the development should be providing a larger number of spaces. Information has not been submitted to date that supports the claim that 90 percent of worshippers will arrive on foot and therefore unless this claim backed up I think it is reasonable to assume that a greater proportion of worshippers will come by car. If 90 percent are not going to arrive on foot where will those who are driving going to park if the car park capacity is exceeded. Therefore I think the applicant should be given a final chance to provide further information, if this is not forthcoming or not sufficiently robust to defend the 90 percent mode share claim then the application should be refused as it does not contain sufficient information for the Local Highway Authority to determine the impacts of the proposed development on the safety and operation of the public highway and the wider transportation network. Therefore the proposed development is contrary to Slough Borough Council's Core Strategy 2006-2026 Core Policy 7.

Response

Officers have written further to the applicant for further clarification on the information provided and this will be reported on the Amendment Sheet.

The applicant has responded with the further clarification:

The reason we have said 90% is because this facility is targeted only at the local residents of the foxborough ward. We do not expect people from slough to come to this facility as they already

have facilities available in slough which will be closer to their homes so they will not come to Langley

Currently the places of worship in slough do not have a high number of people walking as people from Langley are going to slough by car because of the distance. To this place mainly the residents of the foxborough ward will attend and it will be a very short distance from their homes so there will be no need to bring their cars. This will also decrease congestion in Slough as the Residents of The foxborough ward will no longer need to go into slough with their cars and will be able to walk to this premises because of the short distance from their homes.

Response: This is still based upon assumption and has not been substantiated. Officers are still of the view that this may be unrealistic.

- 6.2 Neighbourhood Protection
Have confirmed that there are no objections to the proposed change of use from Club to Islamic Centre and that no complaints about noise were received when the building was used as a club.

PART B: PLANNING APPRAISAL

- 7.0 Policy Background

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Core Policies 7, 8 and 11 of the Slough Local Development Framework, Core Strategy (2006 – 2026) Development Plan Document December 2008
Policies EN1 and T2 of the adopted local plan for Slough 2004.

- 7.1 The proposal is assessed in relation to:
- Principle of the change of use
 - Impact on neighbouring uses/occupiers
 - Traffic and Parking

- 8.0 Principle of the Change of Use

- 8.1 The overarching Core Planning principles of the NPPF requires that planning *should always seek to ensure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings* (Paragraph 17). Paragraph 70 further states that: *To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should....plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of*

communities and residential environments.....and ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

Core Policy 11 of the Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006 – 2026) Development Plan Document December 2008 states that: *The development of new facilities which serve the recognised diverse needs of local communities will be encouraged. All development should be easily accessible to all and everyone should have the same opportunities.*

- 8.2 The principle of using the building as *an Islamic Community and Teaching Centre and Place of Worship* is supported in planning terms as it would be an appropriate alternative use for the building and would serve as a local Islamic community facility and place of worship for the Langley area.
However, concerns are expressed about the potential for traffic congestion and parking overspill onto surrounding residential streets as set out in the report below.
- 8.3 No objections are raised to the principle of the change of use in relation to paragraphs 17 and 70 of the NPPF nor Core Policy 11 of the Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006 – 2026) Development Plan Document December 2008, although concerns are expressed regarding matters of traffic and parking.
- 9.0 Impact on Neighbouring Uses/Occupiers
- 9.1 The overarching Core Planning principles of the NPPF requires that planning *should always seek to ensure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings* (Paragraph 17). Core Policy 8 of the Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006 – 2026) Development Plan Document December 2008 states that: *All development will respect its location and surroundings.* Policy EN1 of the Adopted Local plan for Slough states: *development proposals are required to reflect a high standard of design and must be compatible with and/or improve their surroundings in terms of relationship to nearby properties.*
- 9.2 The potential impacts identified relate to noise and disturbance. Significant noise outbreak from the building is considered to be unlikely given that its most recent use was as a social club and as part of the original planning permission details of noise attenuation measures were required through planning condition. Nonetheless, in the event that the application was being supported in planning terms, a condition could be imposed requiring that there should be no increase in the ambient background noise when measured at the nearest noise sensitive boundary when the building is in use. Further, conditions restricting the total number of people permitted

to occupy the building at any one time could be imposed, although such a condition would require constant monitoring and would not be enforceable in practice. External noise could occur as a result of people congregating in the car park, particularly late at night. However it is not proposed to change the current operating hours which are: 6.00 am to 23.00 pm daily. The Neighbourhood Protection Section has confirmed that no complaints about noise have been received whilst the building has operated as a social club. Another potential source of external noise could be through the use of external tannoy/loudspeakers. However, in the event that the application was to be supported, this could be regulated through the imposition of planning conditions.

- 9.3 No objections are raised on grounds of adverse impact on neighbouring uses/occupiers in relation to Core Policy 8 of the Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006 – 2026) Development Plan Document December 2008 nor Policy EN1 of the Adopted Local plan for Slough 2004 on the basis that had the application been supported in planning terms, conditions could be imposed covering noise breakout, operating hours and a restriction on the use of external tannoy systems or loudspeakers,
- 10.0 Traffic and Parking
- 10.1 The Council's consulting transport and highway engineer is raising no objection on grounds of transport impact on the basis that the pattern of travel would be similar between the two uses. In discussions which have since pursued, it has been agreed that further information is needed on how the building is to be used in terms of total numbers and modes of travel, to allow a more informed decision to be made. The requested information is set out as responses in paragraph 6.1 above.
- 10.2 There are a total of 35 no. parking spaces available to serve the existing building. From the site visit it would appear that whilst the building is currently unoccupied, the car park is being used informally by visitors to the neighbouring health centre. The site visit was made on a Wednesday at 11.30 am and there were a total of 14 no. cars in the car park. In addition the adjacent health centre car park was almost full and there were additional cars parked on street. The existing use of the building is sui generis and with the absence of a specific car parking standard, this was previously assessed on its individual merits. The current proposal falls into Class D1, albeit there are varying parking standards within that use class depending on the actual use.
- 10.3 The approved parking standard for a place of worship is 1 space per 10 sq metres. On the basis of the submitted layout, only the first floor is proposed as a prayer hall. Taking the net floor area i.e. excluding circulation areas, toilet areas and kitchen, the total floor

area is 215 sq m. requiring 22 no. car parking spaces and leaving a balance of 13 no. spaces to serve the ground floor which comprises 2 no. classrooms, reception and Committee room.

- 10.4 Assessing the planning application strictly on the basis of how it is proposed to be used and in accordance with the Council's approved car parking standards, it could be argued that a total of 35 car parking spaces would be sufficient, to support the use. However, drawing on local experience from other similar places of worship in Slough, where there are problems with parking spilling over onto neighbouring roads, it is considered that a total of 35 no. car parking spaces may prove to be inadequate. The applicant has advised that on special days, of which there are 2 no. in each calendar year, the maximum number of people attending would not exceed 300 people. The further issue is that both places of worship and community/education centres fall within the same D1 Use Class and which are interchangeable without the need for further planning permission, unless controlled through the imposition of a planning condition, but which would prove difficult to enforce against in practice.
- 10.5 Assuming a worst case scenario, in practice both ground and first floors, which would provide a total combined floorspace (excluding kitchens toilets and general circulation areas) of 443 sq metres which could potentially be used for purposes of worship, as indeed may be necessary on special days to accommodate the maximum numbers of people anticipated. There is also the potential for marquees to be erected on the site to accommodate additional persons, on special days or at other times when larger numbers of people are anticipated and which being temporary structures would not need specific planning permission unless controlled by planning condition. The applicant advises that 90% of persons will walk to the centre and would be drawn primarily from the Langley/Foxborough area, although the basis for this figure is not known. Indeed drawing on local experience of other places of worship in Slough, this is considered to be unrealistic, with a high percentage of visitors likely to travel by car.
- 10.6 Whilst the applicant has responded to the queries raised, the responses appear to be based upon opinion rather than fact, and not as requested drawing upon evidence from other similar facilities elsewhere in Slough or other areas. Local experience would seem to suggest that such facilities can and do result in traffic congestion and parking overspill onto surrounding roads. As such, Officers have some reservations about the adequacy of existing car parking and the implications for traffic congestion and parking overspill, particularly as the local planning authority would have little or no control over an intensification of the use from combined education and community centre and place of worship to a place of worship only, with its obvious implications for visitor numbers, traffic and

parking. Objections are thereby raised in relation to Core Policy 7 of the Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006 – 2026) Development Plan Document December 2008 and Policy T2 of the Adopted Local plan for Slough 2004.

11.0 Process

- 11.1 Following an amendment (Amendment 2) to the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2012 , which was effective from the 1st December 2012, there is now an obligation on the local planning authority that a decision notice shall include a statement explaining how, in dealing with the application, the local planning authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with a planning application.
- 11.2 Officers have worked with the applicant to try and resolve the issue of total floorspace, which itself has implications for total car parking requirements. Despite some earlier disagreement over the total floorspace figures, the applicant is no longer challenging the local planning authority over this matter.
- 11.3 On the more general matter of car parking, officers wrote to the applicant requesting further information, as set out in paragraph 8.1 above, to allow a more informed decision to be made with respect to the adequacy of the car parking on site. The applicant has responded as set out above.
- 11.4 It is considered that the local planning authority has worked proactively with the applicant to try and resolve issues of total floorspace, visitor numbers , parking and traffic. However, given officers concerns regarding potential intensification of the use in terms of visitor numbers and associated issues of parking and traffic impact, it is not considered that the proposed use would improve the economic social and environmental conditions of the area and as such does not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework.

PART C: RECOMMENDATION

12.0 Recommendation

12.1 **Refuse, for the reasons set out below**

12.2 The applicant has failed to demonstrate through the submission of supplementary information that the proposal, which has the potential to intensify in terms of its use as a place of worship within Use Class D1 and which when considered in conjunction with other parking intensive uses in the locality, including the neighbouring health clinic and school, will not result in localised traffic congestion and parking overspill onto surrounding residential streets, to the detriment of general highway safety and amenities of local residents. The proposed use is thereby contrary to Core Policy 7 of the Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy(2006 – 2026) Development Plan Document December 2008 which is attached full weight under the National Planning Policy Framework (Annex 1: paragraph 2.14).