

# MEMORANDUM

|                             |                                                                                       |                |        |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| <b>From:</b>                | Brigitte Crafer<br>Landscape Architect                                                |                |        |
| <b>Service</b>              | WBC Landscape and Trees                                                               | <b>App No:</b> | 250637 |
| <b>Address:</b>             | Embrook Corridor, Easting/Northing Only Supplied, Area And As Such Consists Of Large. |                |        |
| <b>Proposal:</b>            | Full application for the proposed creation of a new wildlife pond.                    |                |        |
| <b>Type of Development:</b> | Minor All other developments                                                          |                |        |
| <b>Site Visit Made:</b>     | Yes/No                                                                                |                |        |

## Summary Of Recommendations

- ☐ No comment
- ☐ No objection
- ☒ No objection subject to conditions (and reasons) **stated below**
- ☐ Request further information before determination as **stated below**
- ☐ Objection due to the reason(s) **stated below**

## Comments On Proposal

The site is located within Woosehill Meadows towards to south of the meadows and east of the Greenway and the course of the Emm Brook. The site is an amenity space and a Local Wildlife Site known as Woosehill Meadows located on the edge of Wokingham Town. It is within Flood Zones 2 and 3. It consists of Phase 1 habitat; 'Woodland, Broadleaved, and semi-natural.

There are several trees identified by the Wokingham District Veteran Tree Associated and are on the Ancient Tree Inventory as 'Notable' trees. An area TPO 12/1973 extends along the eastern boundary of the site and consists of Oak, Willow, Hawthorn.

The site is located within Landscape Character Area J1 ' Wokingham-Winnersh Settled and Farmed Clay', one of the guidelines states; 'enhance wetland habitats associated with the Emm Brook through appropriate management, seek to extend the area of wetland habitats through recreating of wetlands (including water meadows and wet woodland)'. The application broadly complies this this ambition.

The applicant, 'South East Rivers Trust' (SERT), plan to re-connect a 340m length of historic river channel of Emm Brook within Woosehill Meadows to by pass the existing weir (see application 203617) . As part of a wider programme of work SERT want to create a new wildlife pond. The site for the pond is located in amenity

parkland known as Woosehill Meadows of grass and woodland. See Site Location Plan 4.4.25 Version 1.2.

### **Pond Proposals**

A small offline pond exists currently but has silted up and is choked with vegetation, and the reconnection of the paleo channel will result in the loss of the pond. A wetland habitat offers niches for a range of species compared to the running water of a river for example. The loss of the existing pond without a replacement will lead to loss of biodiversity.

Ponds are a diminishing habitat in the UK where it is estimated half a million ponds have been lost and of those remaining 1 in 5 are degraded.

SERT intends to create a replacement pond 130m to the south of the existing. The Biodiversity Statement states;

*The pond has been **designed to fit within the existing Greenway and root protection zone of the neighbouring woodland**. All won material will be removed from site and any waste generated recycled where possible or otherwise disposed of responsibly in line with current waste regulations. All work will take place with a view to causing the least harm possible under an Environmental Risk Assessment with a detailed ground search taking place to ensure no species may be disturbed during the excavation process.*

In order for the proposal to meet with Policy CC03iid) of the Local Plan 'to protect and retain trees, hedges and other landscape features', development is required to be outside of the root protection area (RPA) of trees/woodland in close proximity to development. I'm pretty sure the description above refers to the setting between the woodland and the greenway however, we need to see a Tree Survey (rooting area and canopy) of those trees closest to the proposed pond in order to establish the baseline of the RPA and to ensure that the excavation is outside of it. Please submit a Tree Survey and Schedule for the area close to the pond including Arboricultural Impact drawing which will be used to locate tree protection fencing during construction. (Also see Drainage Statement and Flood Assessment).

The proposed pond location is within low diversity native herbaceous grassland which is regularly mown and of low ecological value. It is proposed to plant the new pond with a wide range of species, locally sourced plug plants that will provide refuge and forage for a wide range of species not just aquatic, such as common comfrey that are a valuable source of nectar for bees and other insects and host to Painted Lady Butterflies and lots of moths. It is proposed to use the marginal plants from the existing pond in the paleo channel and weed out the invasive Himalayan Balsam.

The new planting will be protected from dogs by installing a dead hedge along the west side of the pond next to the path.

The new pond location is a depression that gets temporarily waterlogged during high rainfall so is a favourable site for a pond. The area is currently not connected to any surface water drainage networks or sub-surface land drains.

The pond is 163m<sup>2</sup> and a maximum depth of 1.5m which will result in 100m<sup>3</sup> of material that will be disposed of off site. There will be no bund around the pond which will be naturally lined with the existing clay on the site. The pond will mostly be fed by ground water infiltration and rainwater as it sits within a naturally low lying depression. No new surface water or ground water connections will be created.

The pond is located 12m to the east of the Emm Brook. The main working area of the pond is within Flood Zone 3.

Fig. 4 of the Drainage Statement and Flood Risk Assessment shows the proposed pond in an area at higher risk from surface water flooding greater than 3.3% in any given year. The plug plants will quickly knit together covering any exposed soil. Groundworks will not take place in times of high rainfall or increased flood risk.

I have no objection to the proposals and support it wholeheartedly. Please submit the requested tree information – see above , asap.

I require detailed planting plan for the pond, and Tree Protection Plan as conditions in accordance with Policy CC03.

| Conditions & Reasons (if required) |         |         |           |
|------------------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|
| Date:                              | 19.5.25 | Signed: | B. Crafer |