

Date: 8th June 2026
Application: 261220



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Ana Conde De Vega
Thames Water Utilities Ltd

Development Management &
Compliance

P.O. Box 157

Shute End, Wokingham

Berkshire, RG40 1BN

Tel: (0118) 974 6000

Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991

Screening Response Letter

Application Number: 261220

Site Address: Arborfield Sewage Treatment Works, Arborfield, RG2 9JE

Expiry Date: 8th June 2026

Proposal: Screening Opinion application for an Environmental Impact Assessment for proposed notification of demolition works to be undertaken under Permitted Development (2015) rights at Arborfield Sewage Treatment Works (STW).

Dear Ana,

Thank you for your Screening Opinion received at Arborfield Sewage Treatment Works. The application has been screened in accordance with Regulation 6 (2) of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations 2017 (Town and Country Planning Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017) and the supporting Planning Practice Guidance and this is set out in table 1 below.

Site Description

The application site consists of a Sewage Treatment Works plant located at the end of Wood Lane, approximately 500 metres north-east of the settlement known as Arborfield Cross. In total, the site measures approximately 2.58 hectares in size and lies adjacent to an inland river (unnamed) which forms part of the water network watercourse for the Thames Catchment. Consequently, a small southern portion of the application site is located within Flood Zone 2.

Proposal Description

The proposed development is a variety of demolition works of old, outdated equipment and

buildings that serve the STW plant, namely:

- Disused sludge pumping station building and access stairs
- Disused sludge drying beds;
- Chemical dosing area;
- R&D area;
- R&D welfare area;
- Concrete structure inside R&D compound; and
- R&D workshop building

Further to this, the proposals involve earthworks, namely excavation and ground levelling post-demolition of the buildings referenced above.

Planning History

Application Number	Description	Decision and date
041290	Application for temporary permission for the erection of 2 portacabins.	Approved 05/11/2004
140892	Proposed installation a Motor Control Centre equipment kiosk, a switch board kiosk and a walk-in enclosure to house a standby generator, part of an upgrade of Arborfield Sewage Treatment Works.	Approved 18/11/2014
142797	Application for a Screening Opinion for an Environmental Impact Assessment for the upgrading of Arborfield Sewage Treatment Works.	Replied 04/03/2014

Assessment

Before submitting an application, developers who are in doubt as to whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required, may request a screening opinion from the Local Planning Authority in accordance with Regulations 6 (1) and 15 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations) 2017 (the '2017 Regulations'). The request seeks to determine whether or not the proposal is for a form of development that is covered by Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations and whether or not EIA is required.

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 set out that Environmental Impact Assessment's (EIA's) are needed for certain developments whereby the proposal is to have likely significant effects on the environment. The application seeks a Screening Opinion to be considered in accordance with Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Regulations 2017). The key issues for consideration are:

- whether the proposed development would comprise a Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development for the purposes of the Regulations; and if so,
- whether the development is EIA development requiring any future planning application to be accompanied by a full Environmental Statement being mindful of factors such as the nature of the development, size and location and the requirements of Schedule 3 of the Regulations.

In undertaking the assessment, the applicant is obliged to provide enough information about the proposed development for the Council to make an adequate assessment, such as

providing a description of the development and a plan of the site location. Such information has been received for this submission against these requirements.

Schedule 1 Development

It is considered that the proposed development does not fall within any of the categories of development listed in Schedule 1 of the Regulations, which comprise potentially the most significantly harmful forms of development in terms of environmental risk. As such an assessment of the proposal is required to determine whether it falls within the remit of Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

Schedule 2 Development

Schedule 2 development is deemed to be those forms of development listed within Schedule 2 of the Regulations which:

- i) has any part of the development located wholly or partly in a 'sensitive area' as defined in Regulation 2(1) or
- ii) meets one of the relevant criteria or exceeds one of the relevant thresholds listed in Schedule 2.

In having regard to criteria i) above, the site is not located 'wholly or partly' within any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The site is also not within a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or World Heritage Site as defined as 'sensitive' areas within Regulation 2(1).

The NPPG (018 Reference ID: 4-018-20170728) states that it should not be presumed that developments above the indicative thresholds should always be subject to assessment, or those falling below these thresholds could never give rise to significant effects, especially where the development is in an environmentally sensitive location. Each development will need to be considered on its merits.

In addressing criteria ii), the application site consists of a waste-water treatment plant which falls under Schedule 2, Category 11. However, as the proposed works involve changes and extensions of authorised or executed developments, the development falls under Schedule 2, category 13b.

The applicable threshold and criteria to be considered when determining if the proposal falls within Schedule 2 is defined as follows, either:

- i. The development as changed or extended may have significant adverse effects on the environment; or
- ii. The area of development exceeds 1,000 square metres.

The statement submitted with this application suggests that the proposed development exceeds 1,000 square metres. Whilst the application site itself exceeds 1,000 square metres, the **area of development as changed or extended** does not exceed this threshold (approximately 606 square metres).

In terms of whether the development as changed or extended may have significant adverse effects on the environment, the limited nature of the proposed demolition and lack of on-site constraints and objections from specialist consultees (no objections from WBC Drainage or WBC Ecology) reasonably leads to the conclusion that no adverse effects are anticipated.

On the other hand, it is noted that aside from the demolition works proposed, earthworks such as excavation and ground levelling are proposed. Whilst these are not anticipated to have significant adverse effects on the environment, it may be these elements of the proposed works would require planning permission.

The PPG states that if it is considered that the change or extension will not lead to other significant adverse effects, taking into account the effects on the development as a whole, screening should not be required where the change or extension does not meet the criteria or thresholds in Schedule 2. This is likely to be the outcome in the vast majority of cases involving a minor change or extension to an existing development (for example, the majority of permitted developments, such as development within the curtilage of a dwelling house, minor operations, temporary buildings and uses, small business use or minor infrastructure development such as that carried out within the boundaries of airports and other large site operations).

As the proposed development does not meet with Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 criteria, no further assessment is made.

Accordingly, in exercise of the powers conferred by Regulation 6 (6) (b) of the EIA Regulations 2017, the Council hereby considers that the proposed development described in your request and the documents submitted with it is NOT 'EIA development', within the meaning of the EIA Regulations 2017, and hence a negative screening opinion is hereby adopted.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in grey ink, consisting of the letters 'HMM' in a cursive, stylized font.

Development Management
8 June 2026