

## **DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT**



**WOKINGHAM**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

|                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Application Number:</b>                                                                                                                      | 261274                                                                  |
| <b>Site Address:</b>                                                                                                                            | Arborfield Sewage Treatment Works (STW), Arborfield, Wokingham, RG2 9JE |
| <b>Expiry Date:</b>                                                                                                                             | 24 June 2026                                                            |
| <b>Site Visit Date:</b>                                                                                                                         | 16 June 2026                                                            |
| <b>Proposal:</b> Prior approval submission for demolition of 1 no. single storey pumping station building and 1 no. single storey R&D building. |                                                                         |

### **PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS**

Flood Zones 1 and 2  
Countryside (CP11)  
Bat Roost Suitability Habitat  
Green/Amber Risk Zone for Great Crested Newts

### **PLANNING POLICY/LEGISLATION**

#### **Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)**

|              |                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Section 55   | Provides that 'development' includes the carrying out of building operations on land, and 'building operations' includes structural alterations or additions to buildings. |
| Section 57   | Planning permission is needed for all development of land.                                                                                                                 |
| Section 187a | Enforcement for breach of conditions                                                                                                                                       |

#### **The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)**

|           |                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Section 7 | Prior approval applications: time periods for decision                                                                                           |
| Article 3 | In conjunction with Schedule 2, Part 11 Class B grants planning permission for any building operation consisting of the demolition of a building |
| Article 4 | Provides that the planning authority may give direction to restrict the effect of Article 3                                                      |

| 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  |
| 261220             | 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). | Replied 08/06/2026  |

## CONSULTATION RESPONSES

### Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No comments received  
WBC Highways – No objections subject to conditions  
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection subject to conditions  
WBC Ecology – No comments received

### External

None consulted

## REPRESENTATIONS

|                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Parish/Town Council | No comments received |
| Ward Member(s)      | No comments received |
| Neighbours          | No comments received |

## PART B.1 APPRAISAL

| Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)                                                 |                     |                                                                                                           | Yes | No |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1                                                                                               | s.55                | Does it constitute development?                                                                           | ✓   |    |
| 2                                                                                               | s.191               | Would it be contrary to an enforcement notice?                                                            |     | ✓  |
| 3                                                                                               | s.187a<br>Art.3 (4) | Would it be contrary to any condition imposed by any planning permission granted or deemed to be granted? |     | ✓  |
| The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) |                     |                                                                                                           | Yes | No |

|   |                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |   |   |
|---|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|
| 4 | Art.3<br>(5)   | Are the building operations involved in the construction of the original building lawful?                                                                                                                                                                                                | ✓ |   |
| 5 | Art.4          | Is there an 'Article 4 Direction' in effect for the site?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |   | ✓ |
| 6 | Sch.2<br>Pt. B | Does it consist of the demolition of a building?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | ✓ |   |
| 7 | B.1(a)         | Has the building been rendered unsafe or otherwise uninhabitable by the action or inaction of any person having an interest in the land on which the building stands and it is practicable to secure safety or health by works of repair or works for affording temporary support?       |   | ✓ |
| 8 | B.1(b)         | Is the demolition relevant demolition for the purposes of section 196D of the Act (demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area)?                                                                                                                                           |   | ✓ |
| 9 | B.1(c)         | Is the building used, or last used, for a purpose falling within Class A4 (drinking establishments) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order, including a purpose as described in Class AA (drinking establishments with expanded food provision) of Part 3 of Schedule 2 to this Order? |   | ✓ |

## PART B.2 APPRAISAL

Development under Class B is permitted subject to the following requirements under Part B.2:

*b)(i) ...the developer must, before beginning the development apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the method of demolition and any proposed restoration of the site.*

The application was accompanied by the following documentation:

- Demolition Notice Statement
- Demolition Notice
- Demolition Method Statement
- Demolition Asbestos Survey
- Demolition Area Plan
- Arboricultural Constraints Report
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Location Plan
- Application form
- Cover letter

Given the level of demolition proposed, it is considered this documentation is sufficient for the Council to ascertain that the method of demolition is acceptable and the site will be remediated appropriately.

Restoration proposed involves backfilling the excavations, plus the grading of the land to marry up with adjacent land levels. The proposed backfilling of subterranean voids would constitute restoration of the site following demolition and is considered

to fall within the scope of Class B, being necessary to stabilise and make safe the land. No additional operational development beyond that incidental restoration is proposed.

WBC Highways raise no objection to the proposed demolition, but have requested a Demolition Traffic Management Plan and Public Rights of Way Plan as conditions. It is however considered that the Demolition Method Statement submitted adequately covers all relevant mitigation, and it is important to highlight that the access to the site is already established and under use.

Similarly, WBC Landscape and Trees raise no objections subject to a condition requesting arboricultural protection information, since there is one Category A tree within close proximity to the proposed demolition. Such measures are covered within the Arboricultural Constraints Report and will be conditioned as part of any recommendation to approve.

On the basis of this information and given the relative minor impact of the demolition process (subject to being in accordance with the submitted documentation), prior approval is required and is given.

*(b)(ii) an application described in paragraph (b)(i) must be accompanied by a written description of the proposed development, a statement that a notice has been posted in accordance with paragraph (b)(iv) and any fee required to be paid;*

The application was accompanied by a written statement and note in relation to the site notice. There is confirmation of payment of the correct fee.

*(b)(iv) subject to paragraph (b)(v), the applicant must display a site notice by site display on or near the land on which the building to be demolished is sited and must leave the notice in place for not less than 21 days in the period of 28 days beginning with the date on which the application was submitted to the local planning authority;*

There is nothing to suggest that the sign was not in place for the entire period; a Case Officer visited on 16<sup>th</sup> June to confirm it had been posted adjacent to the site.

*(b) (vii), (viii) and (ix) relate to the provisions when determining a prior approval application. Where applicable, this has been accorded with.*

#### **PROTECTED SPECIES**

Although the impact of development on protected species is not specifically referred to in the GPDO, consideration is nonetheless required under the duty imposed by Regulation 9 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This requires consideration as to whether there is a reasonable likelihood of protected species being present and affected by a development proposal, including those requiring prior approval.

The application site lies within an area identified on Council's records as potentially suitable for bat roosts and within a green/amber impact risk zone for Great Crested Newts. It is also located approximately 2km from the Longmoor Bog SSSI.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal accompanies this application. Whilst there are no

anticipated impacts on GCNs, there is the potential for bats to be impacted by demolition due to the presence of densely vegetated boundaries and minor crevices in the built forms.

In the event that these species are discovered and may be disturbed throughout the demolition process, works are to stop immediately and a qualified ecologist contacted. Informatives are added to this effect, including precautionary measures in case badgers attempt to traverse the site to reach foraging opportunities.

**The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010):**

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

**RECOMMENDATION**

|                                    |                           |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Conditions agreed:</b>          | Not required              |
| <b>Recommendation:</b>             | Prior Approval – Approval |
| <b>Date:</b>                       | 22 June 2026              |
| <b>Earliest date for decision:</b> | 18 June 2026              |

|                                                           |                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Recommendation agreed by:<br/>(Authorised Officer)</b> |  |
| <b>Date:</b>                                              | <b>22 June 2026</b>                                                                 |