

MEMORANDUM

From:	Louise Aparo Ecology Officer		
Service	WBC Ecology	App No:	260424
Address:	Keep Hatch Primary School, Ashridge Road, Wokingham, RG40 1PG.		
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed erection of a detached single storey building to form a new SEND unit with associated landscaping.		
Type of Development:	Minor All other developments		
Site Visit Made:	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

Documents submitted and reviewed in support of this application:

- Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation, 30th January 2026 by Jomas, Engineers Environmental Land Remediation.
- Ecological Assessment, 30th January 2026 by Jomas, Engineers Environmental Land Remediation.

Biodiversity Net Gain

To comply with the Environment Act 2021, all developments, with some exceptions, are obligated to achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity. To demonstrate this development can comply with the Environment Act 2021, the applicant's ecologist has submitted a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment. I agree with the baseline conditions submitted within the BNG metric.

The submitted biodiversity metric does present a post-development scenario which surpasses the 10% net gain obligation. While it is not appropriate at this stage to approve the detailed habitat proposals as it's a pre-commencement condition, the proposal relies on on-site habitat creation of tree and shrub planting and adhere to the gain hierarchy. To ensure the proposed habitats are managed for 30 years, details of management and monitoring will need to be secured through a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP).

Protected Species

An Ecological Assessment has been submitted in support of the application to identify the presence of, and potential impacts on, protected and priority species and habitats. The application site comprises areas of hardstanding, heavily managed modified grassland and a small number of urban trees, all within an existing urban context.

The Ecological Assessment identifies a potential risk of adverse effects on breeding birds arising from the proposed removal of two urban trees. All wild birds, along with their nests and eggs, are afforded protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. To ensure compliance with this legislation and to minimise the risk of harm to breeding birds, the applicant's ecologist recommends that an Ecological Clerk of Works undertakes checks of any vegetation prior to removal. Should an active nest be identified, works would be delayed until the young have successfully fledged. This precautionary approach is considered appropriate, and it is recommended that a condition be imposed to secure protection for breeding birds.

Amphibians and great crested newts

A pond is located approximately 20 metres east of the application site, with a further two ponds recorded within 500 metres. However, the proposed development is confined solely to existing areas of hardstanding, which are not suitable habitat for amphibians, including great crested newts. As such, the development is not expected to result in adverse effects on these species or their habitats.

Biodiversity Enhancements

Chapter 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Wokingham Borough Development Plan require development proposals to deliver measurable biodiversity benefits through building layout, design, or landscaping.

In order to comply with national and local policy, the applicant's ecologist has recommended the incorporation of bat, bird, and bee bricks within the fabric of the proposed dwelling. As no specific quantities have been set out, it is considered reasonable and proportionate to require the installation of one bat brick, one bird brick, and one bee brick within the new building. To ensure delivery of these biodiversity enhancements, it is recommended that a Species Compensation and Enhancement condition is attached to any grant of planning permission.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Protection of Breeding Birds During Construction Condition

No removal, planting or impact of hedgerows and trees shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check of vegetation for active birds' nests immediately before the vegetation is cleared and provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written confirmation should be submitted to the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure this protected species is not impacted by the development and in keeping with national legislation Countryside and Wildlife

Act 1981.

Species Compensation and Enhancement Condition

Condition: Prior to construction, a scheme for ecological permeability and biodiversity compensation and enhancement, such as the incorporation of one permanent bat roosting feature, one bird box and one pollinator bee brick, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The approved details thereafter shall be implemented, retained and maintained for their designed purpose in accordance with the approved scheme. The scheme shall include, but not limited to, the following details:

- a) Description, design or specification of the type of feature(s) or measure(s) to be undertaken;
- b) Materials and construction to ensure long lifespan of the feature/measure
- c) A drawing(s) showing the location and where appropriate the elevation of the features or measures to be installed or undertaken.
- d) When the features or measures will be installed within the construction, occupation, or phase of the development.

Reason: To ensure the development is policy compliant with regards to Policy TB23: Biodiversity and Development of the Wokingham Borough Development Plan.

Date:	28/04/26	Signed:	L.Aparo
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