
Thank you for your consultation.

Case Ref: 251421	Date: 18 th February 2025
Location: Land At Old Forest Road Wokingham	Response: No Objection
Proposal: Full application for erection of 53 no. dwellings with associated landscaping, parking, drainage, open space and other associated works.	
Recommendation(s): The Applicant has submitted a NatureSpace Report (202509008) dated 27 th January 2026 and Impact Plan “Land At Old Forest Road, Wokingham: Impact Plan for great crested newt District Licensing (Version 1)” dated 27 th January 2026. It would be recommended that the conditions and informatives contained within the NatureSpace Certificate are appended to the planning consent verbatim following a positive determination. The Conditions and Informatives are included below for convenience: Conditions: 1. No development hereby permitted shall take place except in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Council’s Organisational Licence (WML-OR137, or a ‘Further Licence’) and with the proposals detailed on plan “Land At Old Forest Road, Wokingham: Impact plan for great crested newt District Licensing (Version 1)”, dated 27th January 2026. Reason: In order to ensure that adverse impacts on great crested newts are adequately mitigated and to ensure that site works are delivered in full compliance with the Organisational Licence (WML OR137, or a ‘Further Licence’), section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Circular 06/2005 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. 2. No development hereby permitted shall take place unless and until a certificate from the Delivery Partner (as set out in the District Licence WML-OR137, or a ‘Further Licence’), confirming that all necessary measures regarding great crested newt compensation have been appropriately dealt with, has been submitted to and approved by the planning authority and the authority has provided authorisation for the development to proceed under the district newt licence. The delivery partner certificate must be submitted to this planning authority for approval prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved.	

Reason: In order to adequately compensate for negative impacts to great crested newts, and in line with section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Circular 06/2005 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

3. No development hereby permitted shall take place except in accordance with Part 1 of the Great Crested Newt Mitigation Principles, as set out in the District Licence (WML-OR137, or a 'Further Licence') and in addition in compliance with the following:

- Works which will affect likely newt hibernacula may only be undertaken during the active period for amphibians.
- Capture methods must be used at suitable habitat features prior to the commencement of the development (i.e., hand/destructive/night searches), which may include the use of temporary amphibian fencing, to prevent newts moving onto a development site from adjacent suitable habitat, installed for the period of the development (and removed upon completion of the development).
- Amphibian fencing and pitfall trapping must be undertaken at suitable habitats and features, prior to commencement of the development.

Reason: In order to ensure that adverse impacts on great crested newts are adequately mitigated and to ensure that site works are delivered in full compliance with the Organisational Licence (WML OR137, or a 'Further Licence'), section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Circular 06/2005 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Informatives:

- It is recommended that the NatureSpace Best Practice Principles are considered and implemented where possible and appropriate.
- It is recommended that the NatureSpace certificate is submitted to this planning authority at least 6 months prior to the intended commencement of any works on site.
- It is essential to note that any works or activities whatsoever undertaken on site (including ground investigations, site preparatory works or ground clearance) prior to receipt of the written authorisation from the planning authority which permits the development to proceed under the District Licence (WML-OR137, or a 'Further Licence') are not licensed under the great crested newt District Licence. Any such works or activities have no legal protection under the great crested newt District Licence and if offences against great crested newts are thereby committed then criminal investigation and prosecution by the police may follow.
- It is essential to note that any ground investigations, site preparatory works and ground / vegetation clearance works / activities (where not constituting development under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) in a red zone site authorised under the

District Licence but which fail to respect controls equivalent to those detailed in the planning condition above which refers to the NatureSpace great crested newt mitigation principles would give rise to separate criminal liability under the District Licence, requiring authorised developers to comply with the District Licence and (in certain cases) with the GCN Mitigation Principles (for which Natural England is the enforcing authority); and may also give rise to criminal liability under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and/or the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (for which the Police would be the enforcing authority).

N.B. It should be noted that impacts to GCN will not be permitted under the Wokingham Borough Council District Licence until written authorisation is issued by the District Licensing officer. Written authorisation will be issued independently of planning permission following determination.

Sender Contact Details: Info@naturespaceuk.com

Wokingham Borough Council holds a Great Crested Newt Organisational (or “District”) Licence granted by Natural England. This is administered by NatureSpace Partnership through their District Licensing Scheme as the council’s delivery partner. A dedicated 'District Licensing Officer' is employed by NatureSpace to provide impartial advice to the council and help guide them and planning applicants through the process. All services and arrangements are facilitated in an unbiased, independent and transparent manner. Standing advice on District Licences from Natural England is available [here](#).

You can find out more at www.naturespaceuk.com

Date: 18/02/2026

Signed: NatureSpace

Summary including ecological information:

Include a map of area, IRZ and ponds.

Figure above: Outline of the site (red) in the context of the surrounding landscape, including the Impact Risk Zones for GCN. Ponds are shown in light blue. A 250m buffer is shown around the site in green and a 500m buffer in blue. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

Legislation, Policy, and Guidance

Reasonable Likelihood of Protected Species

Permission can be refused if adequate information on protected species is not provided by an applicant, as it will be unable to assess the impacts on the species and thus meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), ODPM Circular 06/2005 or the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The Council has the power to request information under Article 4 of the Town and Country (Planning Applications) Regulations 1988 (SI1988.1812) (S3) which covers general information for full applications. CLG 2007 'The validation of planning applications' states that applications should not be registered if there is a requirement for an assessment of the impacts of a development on biodiversity interests.

Section 99 of ODPM Circular 06/2005 states:

"It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted. However, bearing in mind the delay and cost that may be involved, developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by development. Where this is the case, the survey should be completed and any necessary measures to protect the species should be in place, through conditions and / or planning obligations before permission is granted."

Great crested newts

Great crested newts and their habitats are fully protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Therefore, it is illegal to deliberately capture, injure, kill, disturb or take great crested newts or to damage or destroy breeding sites or resting places. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is illegal to intentionally or recklessly disturb any great crested newts occupying a place of shelter or protection, or to obstruct access to any place of shelter or protection (see the legislation or seek legal advice for full details). Local planning authorities have a statutory duty in exercising of all their functions to 'have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving and enhancing biodiversity,' as stated under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended), as well as a duty under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) to have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive. As a result, GCN and their habitats are a material consideration in the planning process.

Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys

Validity of ecological reports and surveys can become compromised overtime due to being out-of-date. CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing (CIEEM, 2017) states, if the age of data is between 12-18 months, "the report authors should highlight whether they consider it likely to be necessary to update surveys". If the age of the data is between 18 months to 3 years an updated survey and report will be required and anything more than 3 years old "The report is unlikely to still be valid and most, if not all, of the surveys are likely to need to be updated".