

MEMORANDUM

From:	Louise Aparo Ecology Officer		
Service	WBC Ecology	App No:	252167
Address:	11 Mayflower Meadow, Spencers Wood, Wokingham, RG7 1YD.		
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed material change of use from amenity land to residential to facilitate the erection a single storey side/rear extension with installation of roof lights and erection of outbuilding (part retrospective).		
Type of Development:	Minor All other developments		
Site Visit Made:	Yes/No		

Summary Of Recommendations

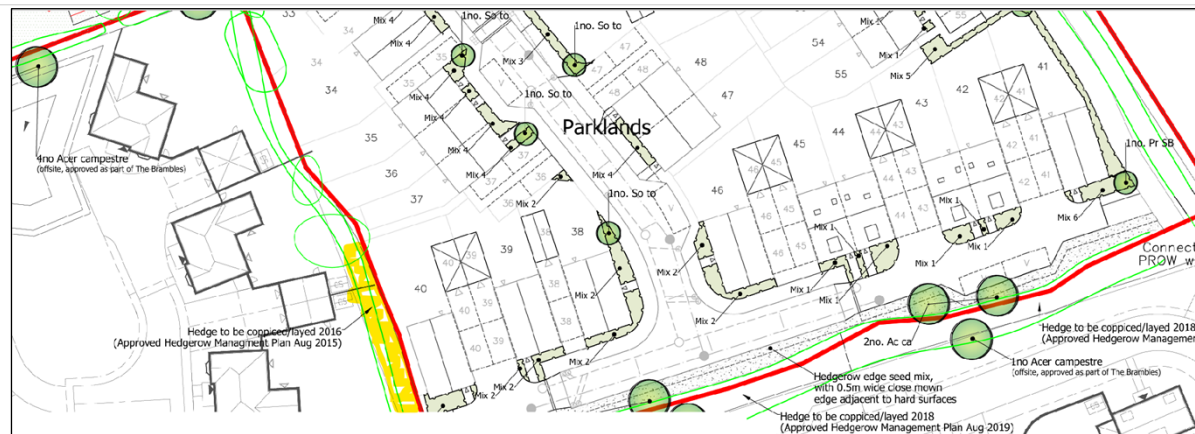
- ☐ No comment
- ☐ No objection
- ☐ No objection subject to conditions (and reasons) **stated below**
- ☒ **Request further information before determination as stated below**
- ☐ Objection due to the reason(s) **stated below**

Comments On Proposal

Context

The proposal seeks full planning permission for the change of use of land from amenity open space to residential. The land in question includes a hedgerow that was originally intended to be retained and form part of the wider estate's permeability strategy related to Reserved Matters 201337. Under the Reserved Matters application, Drawing '*Residential Area RMA Detailed Landscape Proposals North*' (Figure 1) shows the hedgerow as retained and outside of the redline boundary of development. Additionally, the hedgerow is a part of the Approved Hedgerow Management Plan August 2015 for the neighbouring housing estate: Reserved Matters application: 150543.

Figure 1: Snip of Drawing '*Residential Area RMA Detailed Landscape Proposals North*'. Yellow highlighter indicates application site land.



Additionally, the change of use would result in the loss of this hedgerow, along with three species-specific enhancement features previously secured for the neighbouring housing estate RM app: 150543

From a policy perspective, the proposal conflicts with Wokingham Core Strategy Policy and CP7 (Biodiversity), which require development to protect and enhance green infrastructure, avoid the loss of important landscape features, and deliver measurable biodiversity improvements. The proposal also sits at odds with Wokingham Borough Development Plan, Policy TB23 (Biodiversity and

Development), which expects existing habitats and species enhancements to be retained and integrated into new development unless clear justification is provided.

The applicant will need to provide details on how they will ensure permeability to not undermine the permeability and green infrastructure of the wider estate and neighbouring estate and compensation for the loss of the species-specific enhancements. I recommend seeking an ecologist to produce a permeability plan and enhancement plan.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The removal of the hedgerow, which measures approximately 42.98m in length, exceeds the threshold for the de minimis exemption, which states development that affects less than 5 meters of linear habitat are exempt from the Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement. A full BNG Assessment and Statutory Metric will therefore be required to quantify the biodiversity losses arising from the proposal and to identify the level of compensation necessary.

Available aerial photography and historical imagery indicate that the hedgerow has already undergone degradation between 2022 (Image 1) and 2026 (Image 2), with a section of the hedgerow removed entirely and possibly a mature tree. For the purposes of establishing an accurate BNG baseline, the assessment must include the **entire** original hedgerow extent, including the portions already lost or degraded, as these losses form part of the ecological impact associated with the proposed change of use.

Image 1: Left image - Google aerial imagery 2022.

Image 2: Right Image – Google aerial imagery 2026



Conditions & Reasons (if required)

No conditions can be recommended at this stage, as further information is required.

Date:	09/03/26	Signed:	L.Aparo
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