

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	261121
Site Address:	Wokingham Youth Centre, Reading Road, Wokingham, RG41 1EG
Expiry Date:	21 July 2026
Site Visit Date:	8 June 2026
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a free-standing pitched roof canopy to the front to facilitate relocation of main entrance plus changes to fenestration, new canopy over existing cycle store along with associated landscaping and new drop kerb following demolition of a buggy store.	

PLANNING POLICY	
National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP2 – Inclusive Communities CP3 – General Principles for Development CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation DM3 - Protection of Habitats and Species DM9 - Protecting Health, Safety and Amenity DM10 - Flood Risk DM15 - Site History
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy SS3 – Development within or adjacent to major and modest settlements SS17 – Transport improvements CE1 – Design principles for efficient buildings CE2 – Environmental standards for non-residential development C1 – Active and sustainable transport and accessibility C3 – Active travel

	C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging FD1 – Development and flood risk FD2 – Sustainable drainage NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE5 – Landscape and design DH1 – Place making and quality design DH2 – Safeguarding amenity HC1 – Promoting healthy communities HC2 – Community infrastructure
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
41763	*Not recorded on file	*Not on file
42802	New Youth and Community Centre with associated car parking and a tennis court.	Approved 06/07/1994
022129	Proposed single storey rear extension to form conservatory.	Approved 05/06/2002
090693	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent F/2009/0032: 4. Samples/details of materials.	Replied 14/04/2009
090942	Application for temporary permission for a period of five years for the proposed erection of a modular unit on current disabled parking bays to provide extra accommodation for the ARC Youth Counselling Service.	Approved 04/03/2009
100205	Application for submission of details to comply with conditions 4 & 5 of planning consent F/2010/1207. 4. Details of buggy store. 5. Scheme of landscaping.	Approved 26/11/2010
101910	Application for a non-material amendment to planning consent F/2010/1207 to allow an additional window to existing changing room, which is to be converted into an office area.	Approved 26/11/2010
102255	Erection of single storey front and side extensions to existing Youth and Community Centre.	Approved 17/09/2010
102483	Application for submission of details to comply with condition 6 of planning consent F/2010/1207. 6. Travel Plan.	Refused 12/01/2011

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Property Services – No comments received
WBC Environmental Health – No objection
WBC Highways – No objection
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection subject to conditions. *Officer comments: This will be discussed within the main report.*
WBC Ecology – No comments received

External

None

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Wokingham Town Council have commented in support of the application.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	One neighbour has commented on this application in objection, their comments are summarised and responded to below: • No consideration has been given to the impact on the largest regular community use of the site. <i>Officer comments: Given the nature of the proposed works, it is not considered that there would be any impact on community uses on site.</i> • The plans submitted are not representative of the full of extent of the works being undertaken, nor do they acknowledge that 1/3 of the building will no longer be available for community use given the creation of a Care Leavers Support Hub. <i>Officer comments: The application relates to physical alterations to the building and does not propose a change of use. The Care Leavers Support Hub would remain a community use providing support services to young people. The management of the building, including the allocation of internal floorspace and choice of occupiers, is a matter for the landowner and is not controlled through this planning application. The proposal would therefore not result in the loss of the site's overall community function. The submitted plans accurately demonstrate the works proposed as part of this planning application.</i> • The proposed works will displace a growing church community of 120 people, and will cause disruption for at least four months, resulting in users losing access to the centre entirely. <i>Officer comments: Any temporary disruption during construction, or decisions regarding future occupation and management of the building, are operational</i>

	<i>matters for the landowner rather than planning considerations arising from the physical works proposed. The application does not result in the loss of the building as a community facility.</i>
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APPRAISAL

Description of Development:

The application seeks full planning permission for a series of alterations to the existing youth centre building to facilitate the reconfiguration of its principal entrance and associated external works. The proposals include the erection of a free-standing pitched roof canopy to the front elevation to create a more prominent and functional main entrance, together with alterations to the fenestration of the building and the demolition of an existing buggy store.

In addition, the development comprises the installation of a new canopy for a cycle store which will have the same dimensions as the buggy store, the provision of associated landscaping works, and the formation of a new dropped kerb to improve access arrangements. The works are primarily operational and are intended to enhance the usability and accessibility of the site whilst supporting its continued use as a community facility.

Site Description:

The application site comprises the Wokingham Youth Centre, a single-storey community building located within a spacious plot set back from Reading Road. The building has a simple form with pitched roof elements and a mix of brick and rendered external finishes. It is positioned within generous grounds that include a hardstanding forecourt to the front providing parking and drop-off arrangements, alongside areas of grass and established tree planting which contribute to a verdant, landscaped setting.

The main entrance is situated on the principal (front) elevation and is served by pedestrian routes across the forecourt, with associated features including cycle parking, a covered cycle store, and seating. A modular building is positioned to one side of the main structure with separate ramped access. The site is well-contained and benefits from boundary planting and separation from surrounding uses, giving it a relatively self-contained character with limited direct relationship to neighbouring sites.

Principle of Development:

The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Policy CC02 of the MDD Local Plan sets out the development limits for each settlement as defined on the policies map. The site is located within a major development location and as such the principle of development should be acceptable subject to other material considerations.

The proposal relates to alterations to an existing community facility and does not involve a change of use or intensification of development. Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy seeks to promote inclusive communities and supports the improvement and accessibility of community infrastructure. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high-quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

The proposed works, including the relocation and enhancement of the main entrance and associated external alterations, are considered to support the ongoing use and accessibility of the facility. The development is therefore acceptable in principle, subject to a detailed assessment of its design, impact on the character of the area, and other material considerations.

Character of the Area:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high-quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers. Paragraph 131 of the NPPF (2023) notes that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. The Borough Design Guide SPD further requires that development responds to the key characteristics of the site (Principle NR1), and that it contributes positively to the quality and character of the area (NR2).

The application site is located within a spacious and well-landscaped plot characterised by a mix of built form and mature vegetation. The existing youth centre building is of a modest, functional design with simple pitched roof elements and a mix of brick and rendered finishes. The surrounding area is defined by a relatively open and verdant character, with areas of hardstanding for parking and circulation set alongside grassed areas and established trees. The site exhibits a varied and somewhat utilitarian appearance, with a range of existing features including canopies, cycle and buggy storage, and ancillary structures, which together create a mixed but low-intensity built environment.

The proposed new entrance canopy would project 2.5 metres from the front of the building, it measures 2.15 metres in width and would have a maximum height of 2.8 metres. The proposed cycle store would have the same footprint as the existing buggy store (4.5m x 2.5m) and has a maximum height of 2.75 metres. The new cycle store will find itself in front of the old entrance which will be replaced with a window. These new structures are modest in scale and are clearly subservient to the existing building. The new entranceway provides a more defined focal point to the principal elevation which improves legibility without appearing overly prominent or incongruous. Similarly, the cycle store canopy is a lightweight structure that provides a functional addition, and it is deemed that this would integrate into the existing arrangement of external features on site.

Having regard to the above, the proposed development would not materially alter the overall form, scale or character of the site. The works are limited in scale and would be viewed within the context of an established community facility characterised by a mix

of built elements and soft landscaping. The proposal would preserve the character of the area and would not result in any detrimental harm, in accordance with Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy, the guidance contained within the NPPF, and the Borough Design Guide SPD.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy requires that development does not result in detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers, including matters such as overlooking, loss of light, or overbearing impacts.

The application relates to relatively minor external alterations to an existing community building, including the erection of canopy structures, changes to fenestration, and associated external works. The site is well-contained and benefits from a degree of separation from neighbouring properties, with intervening space, landscaping, and site boundaries limiting any direct relationship with surrounding receptors. The proposed works do not introduce any significant additional built form or changes in height or massing that would give rise to unacceptable impacts in terms of overlooking, loss of light, or an overbearing presence.

Furthermore, the nature of the development would not materially alter the existing use of the site or generate discernible increases in noise or disturbance. As such, it is considered that the proposal would not result in any adverse impact on neighbouring amenity and is therefore considered compliant with Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy.

Landscape and Trees:

The application site is located outside of the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area, however, the site is located along the Reading Road which is identified as being a Green Route within the Borough. Whilst there are several trees of value on site, including a mature Oak in the front entranceway, there are not TPO trees within the site. Additionally, all of the new hard landscaped area appears to be outside of the root protection zone of the nearby trees. The Council's Landscape and Trees Officer was consulted on this application and they have requested a condition that require a tree protection plan to be submitted. Given the limited nature of the proposed works, and as the works are outside the root protection zones, it is not considered necessary or reasonable to attach a condition requiring a tree protection plan. Accordingly, the condition is not recommended.

Conclusion:

For the reasons stated above, the proposal is acceptable in local plan policy terms and therefore is recommended for approval.

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 reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. 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.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

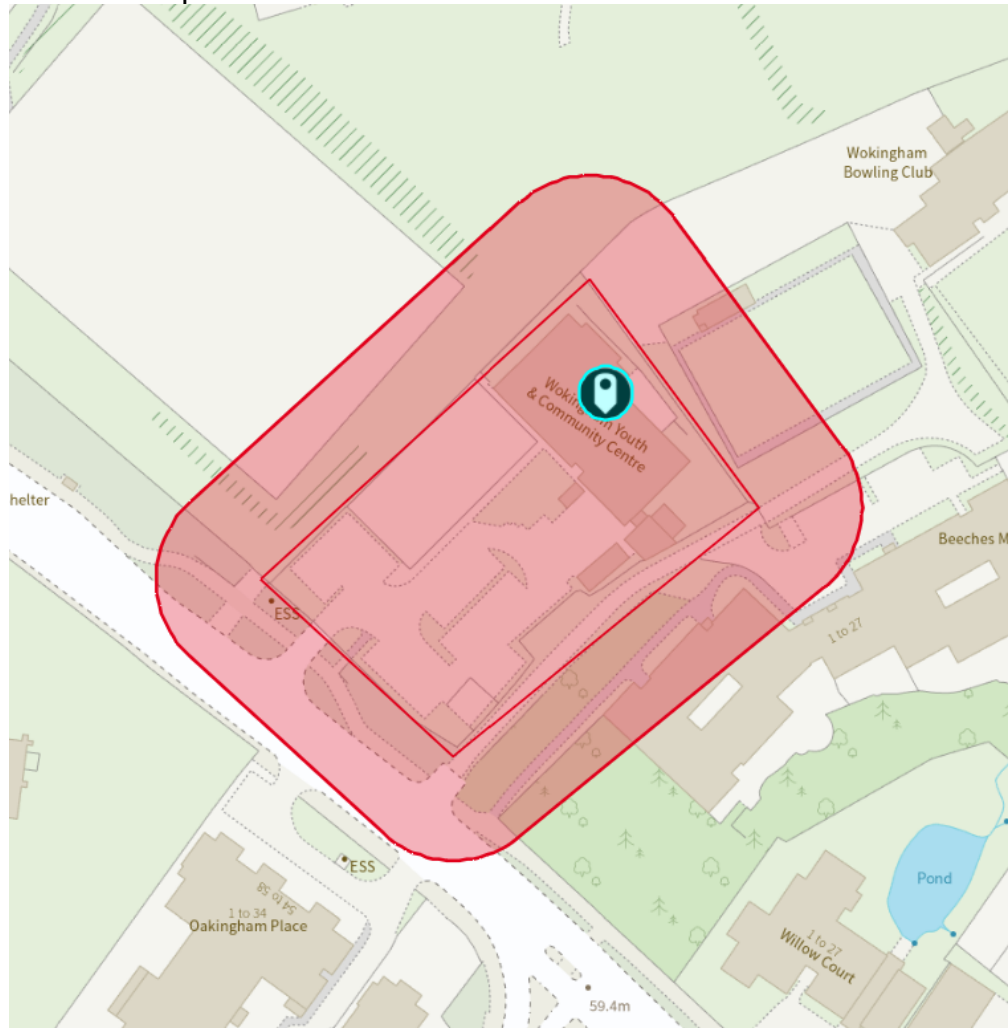
RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	16 July 2026
Earliest date for decision:	16 June 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	16/07/26

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Near Me Report



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Affordable Housing Thresholds | Total count: 3

#	NAME
1	Within Major Development Locations
2	Within Major Development Locations
3	Within All Development Locations

Scale and Location of Development Proposals | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	NAME
1	Major Development Locations	Wokingham

Thames Basin Heath SPA Mitigation Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME
1	Special Protection Area Linear Mitigation Zone	7km Linear Mitigation Zone

Green Infrastructure Routes Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE
1	Green Route

Major Nuclear Sites Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	PLANNING_NOTE
1	Consultation Zone - Major Nuclear Site	AWE: Special Case Zone	ONR also requests to be consulted on planning applications, irrespective of distance from nuclear sites, for special cases. Developments that either introduce a new hazard or change the existing external hazards posed to nuclear sites.

Aerodrome Safeguarding: Gatwick Consultation Zone | Total count: 2

#	Description
1	Please consult London Gatwick on the following: All buildings, structures & works exceeding 150 m AGL.

2	Please consult London Gatwick on the following: All buildings, structures & works exceeding 150 m AGL.
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Aerodrome Safeguarding: Heathrow Consultation Zone | Total count: 2

#	Height Band	Wind Turbine	Aviation
1	All works exceeding 150 metres (492.1 feet)	YES	YES
2	All works exceeding 150 metres (492.1 feet)	YES	YES

Wokingham Borough Council Owned Land | Total count: 3

#	Address	Tenure	Title_no
1	Beeches Manor, Reading Road, Wokingham (RG41 1AA)	Absolute Freehold Estate in Land	BK69069
2	35 Reading Road, Wokingham (RG41 1EG)	Absolute Freehold Estate in Land	BK69070
3	The Holt School, Holt Lane, Wokingham (RG41 1EE)	Absolute Freehold Estate in Land	BK401543

Wokingham Borough Council Leased Land | Total count: 5

#	Address	DESCRIPTION
1	ARC Youth Counselling Service Wokingham Youth Centre Reading Road Wokingham	Counterpart Lease
2	<i>No data</i>	Lease
3	The Holt School Holt Lane Wokingham	Lease
4	4 Bright M's t/a Wokingham Town Room at Wokingham Y & C Centre 35 Reading Road Wokingham	Licence
5	Beeches Manor, Reading Road, Wokingham, RG41 1AA	Lease

Bat Roost Habitat Suitability | Total count: 9

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	XH848	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team

2	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	XI847	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
3	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	XI848	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
4	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	XI849	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
5	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	XI851	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
6	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	XJ847	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
7	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	XJ848	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
8	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	XJ849	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
9	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	XJ850	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team

Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone	Amber	For Householder applications check HH Layer. Consult NatureSpace for all other types of development

Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zones - Minor | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone	Amber	Consult NatureSpace for any minor development that intersects a red or amber zone in this layer

SSSI Impact Risk Zones | Total count: 1

#	SSSI Impact Risk Zone Advice Hyperlink
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1	https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0300000530000&notes=11404&location=475984,168857%20(IRZ%20polygon%20centre)
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Potentially Contaminated Land Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	OBJECTID
1	Potentially Contaminated Land Consultation Zone	1

Water Utility Consultation Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT_WHEN
1	Water Utility Consultation Zone	South East Water Supply Area	New dwellings

Grounds Maintenance Boundaries | Total count: 1

#	PPG17 TYPOLOGY	OWNER
1	Amenity Greenspace	Wokingham Borough Council

Landscape Character Assessment 2019 | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	Name
1	Landscape Character Assessment 2019	Wokingham-Winnersh Settled and Farmed Clay

Wards | Total count: 1

#	Name of area	Closest Approximate Distance
1	Emmbrook Ward	0 m

Parishes | Total count: 1

#	Name of area	Closest Approximate Distance
1	Wokingham CP	0 m