

Addendum

LAND AT DUCKS NEST, ARBORFIELD, EVERSLEY ROAD (250733)

March 2026

Introduction

1. Following receipt of comments from WBC Highways, WBC Public Rights of Way, WBC Landscape, WBC Sustainability, WBC Biodiversity and Ecology, WBC Green Infrastructure, and the planning officer, this addendum note provides a comprehensive response to the points raised by these responses, in turn.
2. Discussions are progressing between the applicant's team and the Highways officers to address the points raised in their response.
3. An updated Noise Assessment is enclosed to address Environmental Health comments.
4. Please note that this addendum should be read in conjunction with the enclosed updated SANG drawings from SLR. An updated illustrative masterplan is enclosed.
5. A document register is appended (**Appendix 1**) for clarity on the documents and drawings which are submitted for consideration.

WBC Highways

6. Discussions have been ongoing between the WBC Highway Development Manager and the applicant's team, following the receipt of detailed feedback on 31st July 2025 and subsequent response from the applicant on 24th November 2025.
7. Technical aspects are being addressed, however agreement is pending on active travel upgrades requested by Highways through a CIL contribution. You will note the recent email dated 3rd February 2026, which suggested 'opportunities' for off-site upgrades.
8. We are seeking the view of the planning case officer on these suggestions. The applicant will agree to appropriate measures where they meet the tests set out in Section 122 of the CIL Regulations, i.e.:
 - a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - b) directly related to the development; and
 - c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

WBC Public Rights of Way

9. WBC Public Rights of Way responded to a consultation request on the above planning application on 23rd July 2025. The comments relate specifically to the SANG element of the proposed development.
10. Having considered the comments and recommendations therein, the applicant has discussed with their landscape architect and a response to each of the recommendations is set out in this letter. The comments from the WBC Public Rights of Way team are numbered in **bold** as per their paragraph numbers. Our responses are below.

9. Consider pedestrian access onto Eversley Road, north of Mallards

11. Given the carriageway width and existing vegetation there are limited opportunities to improve the pedestrian environment on Eversley Way between Mallards and the southern edge of Arborfield Cross. Additional woodland edge planting is proposed on this eastern edge to enhance the sense of separation between the site and Arborfield Cross. No additional access point has been provided.

10. It is noted that a Kissing gate with a minimum 1m gap is already situated along the path at the western boundary of the site, along with a kissing gate outside of the SANG boundary to the north . It is recommended that these gates are reviewed to ensure that the most accessible option is available for use, especially given the attraction that the SANG is likely to be for the local area. It is further recommended that a contribution towards the replacement of these gates be sought from the development to cater for the increased public use.

12. Upgrades to existing gates outside the site are not considered necessary, particularly given that existing kissing gates at the green bridge over Observer Way have only recently been installed by WBC.

11. The British Standard for Gaps, Gates and Stiles (BS5709:2018) recommends that the least restrictive option is selected, to ensure that paths can be accessible as possible. The order of preference hierarchy can be summarised as Gap, Gate, Kissing Gate, Stile. It is understood that the SANG boundaries need to allow for dogs to be off the lead within the SANG. Given this consideration a gap would not be suitable but a swing gate or a larger mobility kissing gate should be selected for these locations. This may require separate landowner agreement for the gates outside of the SANG boundaries.

13. SANG plans have been updated to show swing gates at all entrances to the SANG, except where there are existing kissing gates.

12. In addition to the gates listed above, it is noted that a swing gate exists along the western boundary of the path. This will be redundant should the proposed SANG be constructed and therefore it is recommended that this is removed.

14. The swing gate referred to in point 12 of the PROW officer's response provides access from private land at Arborfield Court PROW. It is therefore not appropriate to require its removal as part of this planning application.

13. The proposed design of the SANG includes two Local Areas for Play (LAP) and Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) in the centre of the site. These areas are likely to form key attraction areas for the site. Whilst there are a number of formal paths planned to connect to or pass close to the western boundary of the site, these paths do not provide a direct connection to the LAPs and LEAP. more directly connecting paths from Arborfield Footpath 17 to these areas are likely to be desired by path users and it is recommended that the formal path design within the SANG is redesigned to include a direct link from both the northern and southern sections of Arborfield Footpath 17.

15. The LEAPs and LAPs are outside of the SANG within the POS proposed for the development and are intended for use by residents of the development, and therefore accessibility is focused on providing access from the south. Furthermore, there is a steep slope between footpath 17 and the LEAP/LAP. The proposed hoggan footpaths within the SANG are designed to be accessible to all and would therefore be more appropriate for those with small children than a direct path at a steeper gradient. The existing recreation ground is more accessible for existing residents of Arborfield Cross who wish to take a direct route to the park.

14. It is recommended that Arborfield Footpath 17 is surfaced to cater for the increased public use that the proposed SANG is likely to create. This surfacing should be equal to or be better than the paths within the SANG to ensure that the importance of the footpath is maintained.

16. Arborfield Footpath 17 has been upgraded through the site to a hoggan path to tie in with the proposed SANG paths. This is shown on the updated plans enclosed.

15. It is recommended that the formal path design within the SANG is redesigned to include a direct link from both the northern and southern sections of Arborfield Footpath 17 to the LAPs and LEAP.

17. A connection has been added from the SANG path to Arborfield Footpath 17 in the northernmost corner of the site. This is shown on the updated plans enclosed.
18. The parameter plan does show pedestrian connection zones at either end of the PROW where it enters the site, and therefore does not need to be updated.

16. It is recommended that the gates along Arborfield Footpath 17 are reviewed to ensure that the most accessible option is available for use, especially given the attraction that the SANG is likely to be for the local area. It is recommended that a contribution towards the replacement of these gates be sought from the development to cater for the increased public use.

19. The SANG plans show a pedestrian connection via a stile onto Harts Close. We propose replacing the stile with a gate to make it suitable for a greater range of users, while still allowing dogs to be exercised off lead. Given the carriageway width and existing vegetation there are limited opportunities to improve the pedestrian environment on Eversley Way between Mallards and the southern edge of Arborfield Cross and additional woodland edge planting is proposed on this eastern edge to enhance the sense of separation between the site and Arborfield Cross. The hoggan paths have been designed to be accessible to all, while the mown grass paths provide more direct, but more challenging routes, which is appropriate in this semi-rural environment intended for the SANG.

20. Upgrades to existing gates outside the site are not considered necessary, particularly given that existing kissing gates at the green bridge over Observer Way have only recently been installed, but these could be secured through s106 should the Council consider them necessary to make the development acceptable.

WBC Landscape

21. WBC Landscape responded to a consultation request on the above planning application on 14th August 2025.
22. Having considered the comments and recommendations therein, the applicant has discussed with their wider project team and a response to a number of the key points raised is set out in this letter. The comments from the WBC Landscape team are in **bold**. Our responses are below each comment in turn which the applicant seeks to respond to.
23. On LVIA, the Council's landscape officer has reached a different conclusion to the applicant's landscape team. We maintain the comments contained within the Iceni LVIA, which provides an assessment of the site against the attributes for a Valued Landscape. It concludes that the Site is considered to be a poor representation of the attributes of the Farley Hill Valued Landscape and that there is no reason for its inclusion within the designation. Furthermore, for the reasons set out within the LVIA (Section 4), the Site is considered to be of medium landscape value and sensitivity and therefore we do not judge it to be a 'valued landscape' in the context of NPPF Paragraph 187.
24. We do not intend to provide a further response on this aspect.
25. The viewpoint photography which was not appended properly is enclosed.

Arboriculture

There are a number of changes planned to the highway which needs to be considered in more detail within an AIA to understand the extent of additional tree removals and impacts. There will be minor tree removal to facilitate a pedestrian access to the north from Hart's Close on the southern edge of Arborfield Cross, and removal of trees and hedges to facilitate the access from Observer Way.

26. The applicant agrees to a suitably worded AIA condition. Tree losses will be minor.

There are 3 other large Oak trees that are not recognised in the Tree Survey as veterans but judging the sizes against Dr. Lonsdale's chart both T3 and T14 meet the size criteria at least for Notable / Veteran trees and T4 is locally notable. In view of the evidence and to comply with Policy CC03 and NPPF 193c, the approach with these trees would be to provide the recommended Buffer Zone of 15xdbh and factored into the layout.

27. These trees are not recorded as veteran or notable within the ATI and it should be noted that a substantial number of trees all around the site have been recorded in the ATI as either veteran or notable indicating that the trees in this area have been considered in some detail. These trees are not included in the Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association Survey Map which can be accessed via the Council website. It is widely accepted that the size (girth) of a tree is not a deciding factor on whether a tree is a veteran.

28. It should be noted that none of these trees would be adversely affected by the proposals. It should also be noted that BS5837 suggests that the RPA of a tree can be capped at a radius of 15m however we have not capped the RPAs of T3 or T14 and have shown RPAs of 16.3m and 16m respectively.

Recent tree and hedgerow planting within the scope of the Observer Way scheme have not been maintained and it is reported that there is about 40% failure rate of standard trees.

29. These trees were planted by WBC and should be their responsibility under a LEMP as part of the planning permission for Observer Way.

Impact from SANG

A 2.5m wide section of G10 and G15 will be removed for the route of the SANG footpath – I do not see why this is necessary. G10 is located to the rear of Ducks Nest Farm, and G15 is a roadside hedge. The nature of SANG paths are fluid there is no reason why the path cannot be offset from the boundary line with Eversley Road further into the site to retain G15 in its entirety. The same applies to G10. There is no need for tree removals within the SANG which is an informal space.

30. This is an error within the report it should be G9 & G18, the plans are correct.

The Veteran Oak T12 has an existing pathway within its buffer zone – its not clear if the path will be retained

31. The path referenced is not a public footpath. Notwithstanding this, within the proposed layout the footpaths are kept outside the buffer zone of T12 and suggestions have been included within the landscape report on how people could be discouraged from encroaching into the buffer zone.

I note that T14 (a locally notable tree has fencing, footpath extending into its RPA and this follows through G9. This is on the boundary of the SANG and the development – I can see no proposed mitigation. I suggest the path / fenceline is re routed away from the tree, and a natural gap found in G9 if possible ideally the path would be outside of G9.

32. We have already provided T14 with a larger RPA than is required within BS5837 and even if the tree is considered to be notable this does not afford it an increased buffer zone - the footpath and temporary protective fencing do not encroach into its RPA.

33. The temporary protective fencing can be amended to avoid G9. No mitigation is required.

The tree information will need to be updated in a full Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

34. We request that the full AIA be conditioned.

Landscape

In order to assess the application properly and as the site is unallocated and outside the existing settlement boundary, an illustrative site layout showing possible block layouts and street arrangements needs to be provided

35. An illustrative masterplan with additional detail is enclosed.

We require more information about the design of the main access and how it relates to the existing green buffer along Eversley Road. The views into the site from the existing settlement must be mitigated to restore the landscape character of the Green Route.

36. The design of the main access has minimised the need for vegetation removal as far as possible. As shown on the Landscape Strategy Plan, proposed new native tree and scrub planting is proposed to the north of the main access, which would further reinforce the character and function of the Green Route by providing additional structural vegetation alongside the existing hedgerow. This would reinforce the treed character of Eversley Road, whilst also mitigating views from the existing settlement. Furthermore, the gently curving character of the main access road, coupled with the set back of development behind existing structural vegetation and proposed new green space, means that the green and vegetated character of the Green Route would be retained and reinforced when viewed from the existing settlement. We would note that the planting which has been undertaken recently cannot make a 'significant' contribution towards the Green Route until established.

The development will add another arm to this roundabout with a 6m wide access road and 3m wide shared cycleway/pedestrian footpath to both sides. It will include a crossing point on the northern part of the roundabout. The effect will be to significantly urbanise the rural characteristics of this road junction and have a detrimental impact on the Green Route contrary to Local Plan Policy CC03. The additional tree planting proposed as part of the traffic calming measures will also be affected requiring removal of a number of trees in the way of the new crossing and possibly those affecting sightlines

37. Policy CC03 also states that one of the aims of the policy is to promote accessibility, linkages and permeability between and within existing green corridors including public rights of way such as footpaths, cycleways and bridleways. Therefore, the provision of footpaths and cycleways is consistent with the policy.

SUDS

SuDS will manage the surface water run off from the entire site and include a series of detention basins and extensive network of swales, although the Illustrative Landscape Strategy shows just 2 swales and large attenuation basins very close to built form that leaves very little buffer space for landscaping

38. There are three swales shown, two running parallel to the main access road and one running into the southernmost drainage basin.

There are 3 attenuation basins within the development and the central basin is close to the eastern part of the significant retained hedgerow and very close to the RPA of T3 and 'A' quality tree where I have suggested the standard RPA is increased due to its size and quality (see above), and T4 a locally notable tree. The basin is also very close to the nearest block. Is there sufficient space between the attenuation basin and the nearest dwellings? At the closest point the distance is just 1m away. It is difficult to see how the basin will safely function so close to the dwellings The location needs to be revised. Likewise, the basin just to the north of the entrance at 56.5m long x 24m wide is very close to the nearest block and close to the existing trees. The attenuation basin close to the boundary of Ducks Nest Farm has very little space around it the southern edge within 1m of the block edge.

39. The basins are outside of the RPAs. The preliminary surface water drainage layout plan is indicative and subject to future reserved matters details, at which point more detailed consideration will inform the design such as slope gradients, landscaping and offsets to dwellings.

My colleague in her 2023 comments on the previous application adequately summed up the approach; 'The size of the infiltration basins are very large and over engineered, effectively sterilising large areas of amenity space which then cannot be actively used. If the SuDS are integrated into the built development and landscaped as required by CIRIA guidance, the attenuation basin can be reduced in size and depth and made to look more natural with undulating sides and gradients with appropriate planting in keeping with the existing landscape character.'

40. The basins are not infiltration basins. The basin sides will be varied and undulating. This is a preliminary design suitable for the outline planning application. We have used an average side slope of 1 in 4, but this will allow areas of steeper and shallower slopes with variation to look more natural, which will be subject to detailed design. The size of the basins is a result of the attenuation requirements and planning policy – the alternative is to attenuate in hard SuDS via attenuation tanks. At the reserved matters stage, when the full network is designed and some of the smaller SuDS features are incorporated into the calculations, basin sizes can often be reduced. The basins are not deep; two are 1.5m deep and the other is 1.7m.

41. The applicant would accept a condition requiring drainage details to be approved by the LPA.

It is essential for the Drainage Engineer to work closely with the Landscape Architect to provide an integrated SuDS strategy that relates to the character of the area. A symptom of the layout is the lack of space between existing and proposed landscape features and built form. There is no information regarding the arrangement of the blocks and the interface between dwellings and public realm which seems to follow the trend across the development.

42. This is a matter that can be addressed through reserved matters.

WBC Sustainability

43. We have reviewed the consultation response from the WBC Sustainability team and respond as follows.
44. The Government is seeking to streamline planning and has set out its intention to consult on national development management policies in December 2025 to provide consistency on common development issues across the country, including energy efficiency. This aligns with the previous Government's Written Ministerial Statement of December 2023 that sets out that it does not expect plan-makers to set local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned buildings regulations. The applicant therefore proposes that the development complies with the prevailing building regulations. The Future Homes Standard will apply from 2026 meaning that homes at Ducks Nest Farm will be 'net zero ready' and will achieve a 75-80% reduction in CO₂ emissions in comparison to the 2013 Regulations. Occupiers will be able to achieve net zero by choosing a renewable energy electricity tariff. The Council can therefore be confident that low carbon homes will be delivered on this site, which is the policy aim of CC05.
45. All David Wilson Homes dwellings are built for water use of 105 lppd and have been since 2022, which is below the Building Regulations stricter limit of 110 litres per day and compliant with

Wokingham's policy. How this is achieved is controlled through Building Regulations and as it relates to internal specifications of appliances etc. in the home there is no need for this to be duplicated through planning. Ventilation and over heating is also controlled through Building Regulations.

46. As the officer points out the detail in respect of layout, housing mix, house types is to be determined at reserved matters. This can include submission of details to show the location of air source heat pumps, solar panels and EV charging arrangements on each plot so the Council can assess the acceptability of these in planning terms at that stage.
47. How individual dwellings achieve Future Homes Standards will be controlled through Building Regulations and the current Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) will be replaced with the more accurate and robust Home Energy Model for calculating the energy rating of individual dwellings so that this information is available to future occupiers.

WBC Ecology and BNG

Biodiversity Net Gain Baseline

48. The Ecology Officer identified an inconsistency between the condition assessment of grassland parcel g4-4 within the Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) and the condition entered within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. The EcIA previously described parcel g4-4 as being in moderate condition, whereas the Biodiversity Metric classified the parcel as being in poor condition.
49. The original condition assessment evidence presented within the EcIA for g4-4 has been reviewed. This has confirmed that the parcel does not meet the required species richness threshold, which is an essential criterion for achieving moderate or good condition under the relevant habitat condition assessment guidance (Criterion A of the '5B. Grassland Low' condition assessment sheet states: "There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m2 present, including at least 2 forbs ... Note – this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition") . Where this essential criterion is not satisfied, the habitat must be classified as being in poor condition.
50. The evidence supports a poor condition classification for g4-4, however the summary wording in the EcIA did not accurately reflect this in the previous submission. The EcIA has therefore been updated to correct the wording so that it aligns with the assessment evidence and the Statutory Biodiversity Metric input.
51. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been updated to ensure that the identified veteran trees are appropriately listed within the residential baseline. Furthermore, the relevant hedgerows have been updated in the baseline to capture their association with a ditch. The associated BNG report has been updated to reflect these amendments.

SANG Badger Gates

52. The Ecology Officer noted that the EcIA recommends omission of a fence along the northern boundary of the SANG. It was advised that if a fence is required as part of the SANG design, it should incorporate badger gates, and that details of the type and locations of any such gates should be provided at this stage. It was also noted that badger gates should not facilitate access towards Observer Way or other busy roads.

53. The EcIA has been updated to confirm that appropriate badger gates will be incorporated in the northern fence line. The type and number of badger gates are set out within the updated EcIA and, as illustrated within the SANG: Landscape Planting Plans (SLR, January 2026), these are positioned to ensure they do not provide access towards busy roads that surround the site.

Newts

54. The applicant is willing to commit to entering the District Level Licensing scheme for Great Crested Newts, secured via a suitably worded planning condition.

WBC Green Infrastructure

55. The Green Infrastructure officer provides some comments and recommendations pertaining to the design of the SANG. We note the comment on the preference for the southern LAP to be amalgamated with the LAP/LEAP. This matter can be addressed through the reserved matters stage.
56. The following changes have been made to address the comments on the SANG design. These are detailed **at Appendix 2**:

- Amendments to the paths as requested.
- We have included reference to the cattle corral gates, as requested, as a note on the drawings.
- Added additional planting areas as requested.
- Added wildlife pond secured by a dead hedge fence.

Planning – Illustrative Masterplan

57. The illustrative masterplan submitted in December 2025 is based on the following assumptions:
- Dwellings will meet Nationally Described Space Standards and be Part M Cat 2 compliant, with the exception of the proposed affordable M4(3) dwellings and the upper floors of the maisonettes;
 - One bedroom dwellings will be provided as maisonettes;
 - A private market housing mix comprising 2 bedroom (17%), 3 bedroom (38%) and 4 bedroom (44%) houses, although the exact mix will be established through Reserved Matters
 - The affordable housing mix will be as agreed with the Housing Officer and restated below.

	DWH proposed		
	Social Rent	Shared ownership	Total
1 bed flats	8	2	10
2B4P flats	0	0	0
2B4P houses	16	11	27
3B houses	6	3	9
3B M(4)3 houses	2	0	2
4B house	6	0	6
Totals	38	16	54

- Affordable dwellings will be provided in clusters distributed throughout the site, in accordance with paragraph 4.31 of the Core Strategy, of circa 15 dwellings.

Appendix 1: Document Register

Discipline	Author	Document title	Date	Status	Submission date	Document no.	Rev											Notes
Documents/Plans for Approval																		
	Mosaic	Site Boundary Plan	26/09/24	Original	25/03/2025	1309/002	P											
	Mosaic	Parameter Plan	01/11/2024	Original	25/03/2025	1309/007	N											
	SLR	SANG: Landscape Strategy	Jan-26	Amended	20/02/2026	DNF-SANG-001.5	5											
	SLR	SANG: Landscape Planting Plans - Overall	Jan-26	Amended	20/02/2026	DNF-SANG-002.2	2											
	SLR	SANG: LANDSCAPE PLANTING PLANS - SHEET 1	Aug-25	Amended		DNF-SANG-003.2	2											
	SLR	SANG: LANDSCAPE PLANTING PLANS - SHEET 2	Aug-25	Amended		DNF-SANG-004.2	2											
	SLR	SANG: LANDSCAPE PLANTING PLANS - SHEET 3	Aug-25	Amended		DNF-SANG-005.3	3											
	SLR	SANG: LANDSCAPE PLANTING PLANS - SHEET 4	Aug-25	Amended		DNF-SANG-006.2	2											
	SLR	SANG: LANDSCAPE PLANTING PLANS - SHEET 5	Aug-25	Amended		DNF-SANG-007.2	2											
	SLR	SANG Delivery and Management Plan	Aug-23	Original	25/03/2025	403.06551.00023												
	SLR	PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING ROUNDABOUT (COMPACT ROUNDABOUT 36ICD) GENERAL ARRANGEMENT	Aug-22	Amended	27/11/2025	184395-PD04.1	B D											
	SLR	PROPOSED SANG CAR PARK & ACCESS ROAD GENERAL ARRANGEMENT	Sep-22	Withdrawn		184395_PD08	B											
	SLR	PROPOSED SANG CAR PARK & ACCESS ROAD GENERAL ARRANGEMENT	20/11/2025	Original	27/11/2025	184395/PD14	-											
	SLR	PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO THE SANG - HARTS CLOSE	Aug-22	Amended	27/11/2025	184395/PD06	A E											
Supporting Documents/Plans																		
	Mosaic	Framework Masterplan	Oct-24	Original	25/03/2025	1309/003	22											
	Focus	Illustrative Masterplan	Dec-25	Original		App-SK01-1002	-											
	Strutt & Parker	Agricultural Land Classification Report	Dec-18	Original	25/03/2025													
	SLR	Air Quality Assessment	Oct-24	Original	25/03/2025	410.065723.00001	1											
	HDA	Tree Survey Report and Arboricultural Impact Assessment	Oct-24	Original	25/03/2025	2099.12	3											
	Orion	Heritage Desk Based Assessment	Oct-24	Original	25/03/2025	PN2013/DBA3												
	Mosaic	Design & Access Statement	Nov-24	Original	25/03/2025		17											
	Thomson	Ecological Impact Assessment	Feb-26	Amended	20/02/2026	DWH001-020-008/001	1 4											
	Thomson	Biodiversity Net Gain Report	Feb-26	Amended	20/02/2026	DWH001-020-008/002/	1 3											
	Thomson	Statutory Metric SANG	Feb-26	Amended	20/02/2026	DWH001-020-008	2											
	Thomson	Statutory Metric Residential	Feb-26	Amended	20/02/2026	DWH001-020-008	2											
	SLR	Flood Risk Assessment and Preliminary Drainage Strategy	Nov-24	Original	25/03/2025		4											
	EMS geotech	Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Desk Study Report	Sep-22	Original	25/03/2025	E28112-DS	1											
	Iceni	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	Oct-24	Original	25/03/2025	23-538												
	Iceni	Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan	Oct-24	Original	25/03/2025	DL102	B											
	Iceni	Landscape Strategy Plan	Sep-24	Original	25/03/2025	DL102	-											
	NSL	Planning Noise Assessment	Jan-26	Amended	20/02/2026	90646/PNA	4											
	Turley	Planning Statement	Dec-24	Original	25/03/2025	1776												
	Turley	Statement of Community Engagement	Aug-22	Original	25/03/2025													
	DWH	Sustainability Statement	Oct-24	Original	25/03/2025													
	SLR	Transport Assessment	Nov-24	Original	25/03/2025	184395												
	SLR	Response to WBC Highways	Nov-25	Original	27/11/2025	184395												
	Turley	Response to RFI	Feb-26	Original	20/02/2026													

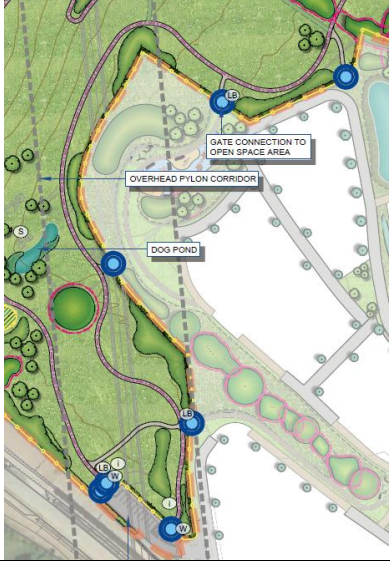
Appendix 2: Green Infrastructure – SANG Updates

2.1	The circular walking route runs almost parallel and within a few metres of the existing Arborfield 17 public right of way on the northwest side of the site. While the SANG boundary is indicated to exclude this PROW path on the Landscape Strategy, the red line boundary appears to include it. My recommendation is to utilise the existing PROW path within the circular walking route, upgrading the PROW path surface to hoggin, and remove the proposed section which runs parallel (the proposed section of path also passes very closely to other sections of the circular walk, which is not desirable).	The path has remained as proposed as it retains the existing PROW as it is and provides an alternative hoggin route within the SANG. 
2.2	The zig-zagging layout of the circular walk, while not generally encouraged for SANG designs, is acceptable in this instance as it reduces the steepness of the path. There are some tight hairpin bends with quite random placement, which may lead to users cutting corners and excessive desire lines forming on these	Features are now included within the hairpin bends, as requested.

	bends. Incorporating features inside these bends (such as benches/specimen trees) would give a reference point to curve the path around	
2.3	One section of path follows the contour line directly towards an electricity pylon, drawing attention to the structure. The arrangement of the paths in this area should be adjusted to avoid this angle, due to the urbanising influence of the pylon as a focal point	The footpath has been realigned so that the view along the path is not terminated by a pylon

			
2.4	Users walking in from the associated housing development (i.e. not using the car park), currently will have to walk through the car park to complete the circular walk, requiring dogs to be put back on leads for a very short section. I anticipate a desire line forming across the grassland to avoid the car park, so an additional section of hoggan path should be installed here to allow the option to cut car park out of walk.	An additional section of footpath has been included as requested:	

		
2.5	In the eastern section of the site, there are several mown paths crossing the area, and an area of planting centrally. I would recommend maintaining the open aspect of this area and removing the large section of planting from the centre. This could be relocated to the smaller southeastern section to create a more woodland aspect near to the dog pond and provide a small pocket of different habitat in that section. I would then also recommend removing the east-west mown path in this section but retain the north-south one	The eastern section has been amended as requested. 

2.6	There is currently only one pedestrian gate from the SANG into the open space area on the housing development. An additional gate on the southern side of the open space would tie this area into the SANG more effectively.	The plans have been updated and show 4 access points to the SANG from the residential development, in addition to the car park access. 
2.7	An additional gate and footpath link would be beneficial between the northern SuDS pond and the SANG	
2.8	The PROW officer has suggested an additional forked path from the two PROW entrances to the site to provide a direct route to the play area. I would contend that this is not necessary. There is little residential area to the southern end of the PROW, so a link from this corner would not be a good use of the space. While the northern end of the PROW connects to Arborfield Cross residential area, there are sufficient mown grass paths down from this point to avoid the zig-zag path. Additionally, the central point at which the PROW officer's suggested path meets the play area is not near the access gate to the play area, so not best placed for this purpose. For this, the addition of a single mown path in the below location would be sensible and sufficient	Additional mown path added as requested. 

		
2.9	The PROW officer has suggested the inclusion of an access point on the eastern side of the site, to which I have no objection. There is a traffic calming island on this section of the road which may be suitable as a location for installation of a safe crossing point.	An eastern access point has not been added given that there are no onward eastern connections and the desire lines through the site being north to Arborfield Cross and south to Arborfield Green.
2.10	The placement of litter bins should be reconsidered. The bin in the northwest corner of the site is not near an accessible road, so would prove more challenging for the bin-emptying contractor. Additionally, there are two bins by the car park, which is not necessary. I would recommend the bins be sited in the following locations:	Litter bins have been relocated as follows:

		
2.11	The plan does not make clear what fencing will be in place around the site. In order to secure the site for potential livestock in future management and for dogs, stock-proof fencing should be present and in good order around the entire site boundary. Detail should be provided on the fencing to be used on the entire site boundary. With this in mind, there is also no proposed detail on gates or access from the PROW in the northwest corner of the site. Further detail should be given on how the site will be secured in this corner and how access will be retained to the PROW.	Stockproof fencing is now shown around the whole site, and as requested by the Ecology officer 2 x badger gates have been included to provide access to the land to the north.

		 The image is a detailed landscape planting plan for a site. It features several key elements: OVERHEAD CABLE CORRIDOR: A dashed green line running along the top edge of the site. GATE CONNECTION TO OPEN SPACE AREA: A dashed line indicating a path or boundary. OVERHEAD Pylon CORRIDOR: A dashed line running through the center of the site. DOG POND: A small, irregularly shaped pond located near the center. PLANT PALETTE: A table in the bottom right corner listing various plant species and their quantities. The table includes columns for 'Species', 'Quantity', and 'Notes'. Notes: A block of text below the plant palette stating: 'WEDGLOW MEADOW AREAS TO BE OVERSEED WITH EMERGENT RAY SPECIAL GENERAL PURPOSE MEADOW MIXTURE (OR SIMILAR)'.
2.12	Further to the above, the site may benefit from cattle grazing in the future. Any existing grazing infrastructure should be retained (e.g. water troughs) and a cattle corral style gateway considered at the main vehicle access point.	Any existing grazing infrastructure will be retained and the vehicular access from the car park to the SANG will be provided for maintenance access with a location for a cattle corral, should cattle access be required. It should be noted the plans have also been updated to reflect amendments to the SANG car park in response to comments made by the Highways officer. Detailed amended car park plans are submitted with the highways and access plans.
2.13	Landscape Planting Plan Sheet 4 (august 2023) shows the proposed installation of a stile into the site on the northeastern corner. Stiles are not	Stiles have been replaced with field gates in accordance with the access hierarchy provided by the PROW officer stating a first preference for gaps (acknowledging

	or replaced with smaller shrubs to prevent shading/leaf litter falling into the pond.	
2.16	The introduction of some variety in tree species would be desirable, both for visual variation and to support wildlife. The top of the site (sandy higher ground) would be suitable for species such as gorse, red/blackcurrant and dog rose. These could be used as features on hairpin bends as discussed earlier in point 2. Further down the site, species such as spindle and alder buckthorn would be appropriate. The addition of some Dutch elm disease resistant elm standards would be particularly good, along with one or two native subspecies black poplars on the site (away from power lines).	The recommended species have been incorporated, with the exception of elm, as while resistant varieties are available, they are not completely immune to Dutch Elm disease.
2.17	The Landscape Strategy Plan appears to exclude the small outcropping of land on the southwest corner of the site from the SANG area. The Illustrative Masterplan seems to include it in the SANG area. Clarity is needed on the inclusion of this area	It has been included within the SANG on the updated plans.

2.18	It is worth stating at this stage that it is the council's preference to adopt SANGs. As such, I recommend a planning obligation to secure in-perpetuity management of the SANG. Any obligation that secures adoption and management by an alternative to the Council will need to include monitoring and step in right clauses (for the Council to elect to take on the site if they can show that it is not being managed for its SANG function) to be confident of in-perpetuity management.	The SANG Management Plan accompanying the submission proposes that the freehold will be conveyed to a suitable Management Company, together with agreed funding for in-perpetuity management via an endowment payment. DWH agree for this to be secured through the s106 agreement.
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Contact

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