

**Date:** 3 February 2026  
**Application:** 260200



**WOKINGHAM**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

WBC Ecology Newts

---

Development Management &  
Compliance

---

P.O. Box 157

---

Shute End, Wokingham

---

Berkshire, RG40 1BN

---

Tel: (0118) 974 6000

---

Minicom No: (0118) 974 6991

---

Dear WBC Ecology Newts,

**Permission In Principle Consultation**

**Application Number:** 260200

**Applicant:** Mr Stuart Brooks

**Site Address:** Brookfield Farm, Old Wokingham Road, Crowthorne, Berkshire, RG40 3BU

**Parish:** Wokingham Without

**Grid Reference:** Easting - 483878, Northing - 166464

**Type of Development:** Minor Dwellings (1-9) PiP

**Proposal:** Permission in principle application for the proposed erection of up to 9no. dwellings.

**Case Officer:** Phillip Richards

Development Management has received the above application, and we require your comments on the proposal using the recommended memorandum below. The documents associated with this are available to view in NEC DM using the application number 260200. Alternatively, public documents are available to view on the Council's planning application search page: [Wokingham Borough Council Online Planning](#).

Please index your response into NEC DM against the application. If you are recommending conditions, you should give a reason with reference to relevant policies. A list of standard conditions can be requested from the case officer.

Your observations are required in respect of this application by **24 February 2026**.

Yours sincerely,  
Development Management & Compliance

# MEMORANDUM

|                             |                                                                                        |                |        |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| <b>From:</b>                | Molly Thompson<br>Berkshire District<br>Licensing Officer                              |                |        |
| <b>Service</b>              | WBC Ecology Newts                                                                      | <b>App No:</b> | 260200 |
| <b>Address:</b>             | Brookfield Farm, Old Wokingham Road, Crowthorne, Berkshire, RG40 3BU.                  |                |        |
| <b>Proposal:</b>            | Permission in principle application for the proposed erection of up to 9no. dwellings. |                |        |
| <b>Type of Development:</b> | Minor Dwellings (1-9) PiP                                                              |                |        |
| <b>Site Visit Made:</b>     | 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

### Summary:

- The development falls within the red impact zone for great crested newts. Impact risk zones have been derived through advanced modelling to create a species distribution map which predicts likely presence. In the red impact zone, there is highly suitable habitat and a high likelihood of great crested newt presence.
- There are 2 ponds within 250m of the development proposal. These are 60m to the west, and 70m to the east of the site boundary. A further three ponds are within 500m of the development.
- Despite Old Wokingham Road running adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site, this does not form a major barrier to GCN dispersal, with the wider landscape displaying a well-connected woodland and hedgerow network.

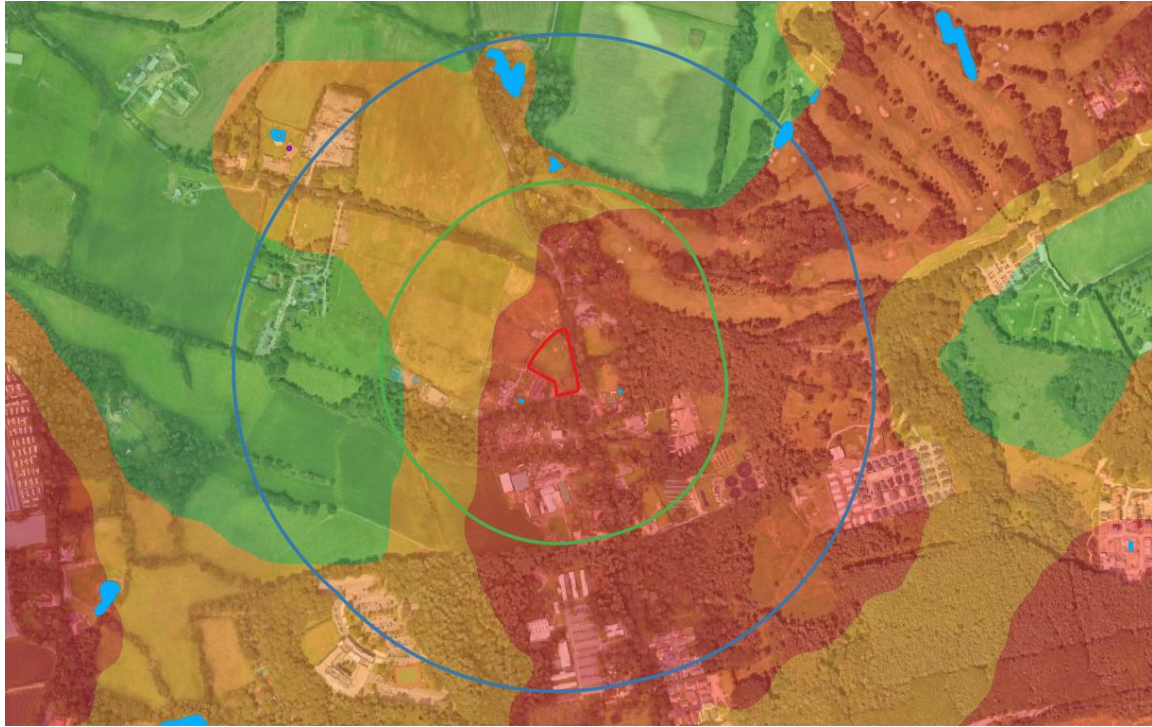


Figure above: Outline of the site (red) in the context of the surrounding landscape, including the Impact Risk Zones for GCN. Ponds are shown in light blue. A 250m buffer is shown around the site in green and a 500m buffer in blue. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government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

### Ecological Information

The applicant has not provided any ecological information for great crested newts on the site. Therefore, it cannot be determined if there is a likely impact.

### Conclusion:

We are not satisfied that the applicant has adequately demonstrated that there will be no impact to great crested newts (GCN) and/or their habitat as a result of the development being approved.

Two ponds are located within 100m of the site (60m west and 70m east) with a further three ponds within 500m. Good connectivity is present between these ponds in the form of hedgerows and woodland, facilitating movement and supporting a potential meta population. Habitat on site may be suitable for great crested newts, facilitating movement during dispersal, or offering hibernation and overwintering opportunities.

Therefore, further information in the form of an ecological assessment is recommended, to establish whether the site is capable of supporting GCN.

Given the above information, one of the following options is required to be undertaken **prior to determination** of the application:

1. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) is required to establish the ecological value of the site and the sites potential to support protected or priority habitats and species, including use of standard habitat classification

techniques such as Phase 1 Habitat Survey (JNCC, 2010).

A PEA must be completed by a suitably qualified ecologist and reported in accordance with CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing (CIEEM, 2017), the British Standard BS42020:2013 Biodiversity — Code of practice for planning and development, and the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017). Please note that the PEA is not time-constrained but if further surveys are recommended, these may be restricted to optimum periods throughout the year dependent upon the target habitat and/or species.

**Dependent on the outcome of the PEA**, further surveys to rule out the possibility of GCN on the site in the form of eDNA surveys may be necessary.

N.B. All survey reports must be submitted prior to determination if not already available.

**Alternatively**, if the applicant would not like to undertake survey work, then a district licence may be acquired.

2. The District Licence scheme (administered by the NatureSpace Partnership) should be applied for. Under the Wokingham Borough Council district licence, development works that may cause impacts upon GCN can be authorised as part of the planning process.

N.B. The applicant is required to submit a NatureSpace Report or Certificate prior to determination if this option is pursued.

## **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 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.

|              |            |                |             |
|--------------|------------|----------------|-------------|
| <b>Date:</b> | 19/02/2026 | <b>Signed:</b> | NatureSpace |
|--------------|------------|----------------|-------------|