

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	250516
Site Address:	78 Barkham Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4ET
Expiry Date:	30 May 2025
Site Visit Date:	8 April 2025
Proposal: Outline application for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached four bedroom self-build dwelling with associated landscaping, following demolition of outbuildings and part demolition of the existing double garage of no. 78 Barkham Ride. (All matters reserved except for means of access.)	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Water Utility Consultation Zones
 Affordable Housing Thresholds
 Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
 Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Finchampstead North (Modest Development Location)
 Farnborough Aerodrome Consultation Zone
 Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone – Green Risk Zone
 Nuclear Consultation Zone – 12km Zone
 Landscape Character Assessment Area
 SSSI Impact Risk Zones
 Thames Basin Heaths SPA Mitigation Zones – 5km Linear Mitigation Zone

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits CP17 – Housing Delivery
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 CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk

	CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB04 – Development in vicinity of Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE), Burghfield TB05 – Housing Mix TB06 – Development of Private Residential Gardens TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB08 – Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities Standards TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (FNDP)

PLANNING HISTORY

There is no relevant planning history for the site.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No comments received
WBC Drainage – No objection subject to condition(s)
WBC Highways – No objection subject to condition(s)
WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection subject to condition(s)
WBC CIL – Development is CIL liable
WBC Cleaner and Greener – No comments received
WBC Ecology – No comments received

External

Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments received
South East Water – No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	The Committee RESOLVED to OBJECT to this planning application on the grounds that it breaches the following Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (FNDP) Policies: 1. FNDP Policy D2.2: Retaining the proportion, scale and the space between the main residential buildings on each residential plot. The proposed dwelling disrupts the proportion, scale, and spacing between existing residential buildings. 2. FNDP Policy D3.2: Provide a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking. The site does not adequately accommodate the
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	development in terms of spacing, amenity, landscaping, access, and parking. 3. FNDP Policy D3.4: Not lead to unacceptable tandem development. The application would lead to unacceptable tandem development. The resolution was correctly proposed and seconded (unanimous).
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	Five representations received raising the following concerns: - Impact on privacy of adjacent properties from overlooking - Loss of light - Access safety issues for vehicles due to increase in traffic - Impact on wildlife in the area - Conflicts with FNDP policies D2.2, D3.2 & D3.4 - Request that a TPO is placed on the three Oak trees adjacent to the site's south western boundary (Officer comment: Any planning consent cannot impose TPOs on trees on site, this is subject to separate legislation.) - Impact of waste collections. - Increased noise levels from delivery vehicles - Impact from construction vehicles and materials

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site consists of a large, detached dwelling sited within a generously wide and deep garden on Barkham Ride, Finchampstead. The site is part of a pair of 2no. detached backland dwellings, both accessed via a 62metre long driveway from Barkham Ride to the south that is densely lined with mature vegetation.

The application site is well enclosed by dense vegetation on all boundaries, including that with 78a Barkham Ride. The existing dwelling is offset to the north-east of the site and has a large shingle driveway on its frontage. Several smaller buildings are present on the site, including several sheds, a greenhouse and an attached garage.

The character of the area is predominantly residential where there are several examples of other backland developments along Barkham Ride. The application site's boundaries are also fully enclosed by neighbouring gardens and residential boundaries. Property sizes and designs vary greatly.

Proposal Description:

This application seeks Outline consent for the erection of 1 no. detached four bedroom self-build dwelling with associated landscaping, following demolition of the existing outbuildings and part demolition of the existing double garage of no. 78

Barkham Ride. All matters related to the development are reserved, with the exception of means of access to the application site.

In terms of parameters, the applicant has confirmed that the maximum ridge height of the dwellinghouse would be 7.3 metres.

The development would subdivide no.78's existing garden to create the curtilage of the new dwelling, which would infill between nos. 78 and 78a Barkham Ride. The existing access from Barkham Ride would be used and the front driveway reconfigured to be shared by both properties.

Principle of Development:

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the development plans for the area are the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy 2010 and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014. At a national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) constitutes guidance which the Local Planning Authority (LPA) must have regard to. The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making but is a material consideration in any subsequent determination.

Core Strategy 2010:

The site is located within settlement limits and as such the principle of development should be acceptable according to Policy CP9 providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. 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.

Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014 (MDDL P):

Policy CC01 of the MDD Local Plan 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.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024):

The latest published assessment of housing land supply concluded a deliverable supply of 2.5 years as of the 31st March 2025.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states under paragraph 11 that where a local planning authority is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, the most important policies relating to the application may be viewed as being out of date. It continues to advise that unless there are specific policies in the NPPF protecting the land subject to the application, that permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF. This presumption in favour of sustainable development outlined in paragraph 11 of the NPPF is commonly referred to as the 'tilted balance' as harm and benefits are not weighed equally, but tilted according to paragraph 11(d)ii).

Paragraph 11d(ii) requires the proposals to be considered against the policies of the NPPF taken as a whole and the three pillars of sustainable development. These will inform the planning balance exercise carried out at the end of this report.

Summary:

The principle of the proposed development within the settlement boundary of Finchampstead is supported in principle by Policy CP9. Notwithstanding the above, the development would represent sustainable development in terms of the principle of development.

Character of the Area:

Policy Context:

With regards to well-designed places, paragraph 135 of the NPPF states planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

Similarly, paragraph 130 states that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. This is supported by paragraph 129 of the NPPF too, which states:

“Area-based character assessments, design guides and codes and masterplans can be used to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places.”

The National Design Guide section B1, paragraph 67 also states that the built form of well-designed places should relate well to:

- the site, its context and the opportunities they present;
- the proposed identity and character for the development in the wider place;

Paragraph 68 follows on from this stating that houses and streets should establish an appropriate relationship with the pattern, sizes and proportions of existing houses in the local area.

Policy CP1(1) only supports development that maintains or enhances the high quality of the environment, with policy CP3 supporting development of an appropriate mass, layout, built form, height and character to the area CP3(a) and which makes a positive contribution to the sense of place contributes to the buildings and spaces.

Policy TB06 of the MDD Local Plan states that proposals for new residential development that includes land within the curtilage or the former curtilage of private residential gardens will only be granted planning permission where:

- a) The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:
 - i) The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area;
 - ii) A layout which integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas, and
 - iii) Existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage
 - iv) Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries.
 - v) Compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area
 - vi) The materials and elevational detail are of high quality, and where appropriate distinctive and/ or complementary
- b) The application site provides a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking
- c) The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards
- d) The proposal does not lead to unacceptable tandem development
- e) The design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas and avoids the need for additional physical security measures.

Policy D2 of the FNDP states that as appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should be located and designed to maintain the separation of settlements and to complement the characteristics of the landscape in the immediate locality through:

1. Locating structures where they will be viewed against existing built form and wherever possible, development should deliver enhancements to the landscape character.
2. Retaining the proportion, scale and the space between the main residential buildings on each residential plot with reference to the built vernacular of the neighbourhood area and conservation of traditional boundary treatments.
3. The use of appropriate plant species in a comprehensive landscape scheme with appropriate boundary treatments to integrate with the rural character.
4. The use of street trees.
5. The protection of existing street trees.

Policy D3 of the FNDP relates to Infill, Small Plot Development and Development of Private Residential Gardens. Development proposals for new residential development that includes land within the curtilage, or the former curtilage, of private residential gardens should:

1. Make a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:
 - a. The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around the buildings within the surrounding area:

- b. A layout which integrates with existing landscape features and the surrounding area, with regards to the built-up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages and parking areas, especially in those locations listed in Annex I Roads with “Rides” Characteristics
 - c. Existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage:
 - d. Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries. This includes features such as the variety of trees, hedges, and hard standing/lawn etc.
 - e. Compatible compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area:
 - f. The materials and elevational detail are of high quality and where appropriate distinctive and/or complementary; and
 - g. The arrangement of doors, windows and other principle architectural features and their rhythm between buildings.
2. Provide a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking
 3. Incorporate an access which meets appropriate highway standards.
 4. Not lead to unacceptable tandem development.
 5. Incorporate a design and layout that minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas and avoids the need for additional physical security measures.
 6. Provide biodiversity net gain and would not have an adverse impact on the biodiversity through the fragmentation of blocks of gardens, which together, or in Association with adjacent green spaces or deemed to make an important contribution to biodiversity and the wider green infrastructure network.
 7. Not prejudice the satisfactory development of the wider area.
 8. The development is within a Development Location (see section 2.1).

Assessment:

As outlined above, backland development is visually and spatially prevalent along Barkham Ride, with the application site being an existing example of such. Whilst the comments from Finchampstead Parish Council and local residents are acknowledged, the subdivision of this abnormally wide site to create another residential dwelling and associated curtilage would appear sufficiently in keeping with the area and proportionate in scale to the neighbouring properties, albeit slightly narrower than both no.78 and no.78a Barkham Ride. The maximum 7.3 metre ridge height of the property would be commensurate with neighbouring properties, and the garden depth would reflect the character of the two adjoining residential plots and would not appear cramped or incongruous within the street scene, particularly as the site’s immediate surroundings is already characterised by densely populated residential estates.

In terms of the dwelling’s indicative siting, it would be partially set back from the principal elevation of nos. 78 and 78a Barkham Ride but would remain acceptably aligned with the overall building line and development pattern. Separation distances from the adjacent boundaries at points measure under 1 metre but as this is an Outline application where final details of the dwelling’s siting are reserved, no objections are raised in this regard as the indicative scale of the dwelling remains

commensurate with surrounding properties.

The use of the existing northern access from Barkham Ride is acceptable and there is sufficient space within the site to adequately accommodate parking and access for all three properties.

Minor areas of landscaping would be lost but their visual value is negligible and would be mitigated via a standard landscaping condition imposed on the decision notice.

Policy TB06 of the MDD Local Plan and Policy D3 of the FNDP resist inappropriate development of residential gardens where development would cause harm to the local area. In the case of this proposal, it would establish a coherent and compatible form of infill backland development to an existing backland site. Access to the site is acceptable and overall, the development would not cause any adverse harm to the local area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Overlooking:

As all details related to the development's fenestration/outlook are reserved for the Reserved Matters stage, it is not possible to conduct a thorough assessment of overlooking. Side facing fenestration would need to be sensitively placed and designed to avoid any adverse overlooking onto the two adjacent properties.

Despite the above, the back to back and front to front relationships of the new property would far exceed the minimum separation distances outlined in the Borough Design Guide, largely due to the generous rear garden width. This is acceptable.

Subject to further details on the fenestration design at the Reserved Matters Stage, it is considered that the development would not result in any adverse overlooking concerns at the Outline stage.

Overbearing:

As outlined above, the indicative location of the dwelling does not ensure a minimum separation distance from each side boundary. This issue can be overcome at the Reserved Matters Stage when finalising the technical details of the dwelling's design/siting.

Aside from the above and providing 1 metre separation distances are achieved, the development is unlikely to result in any adverse impacts onto no.78 Barkham Ride as their east (side) fenestration facing towards the new dwelling is well recessed, ensuring separation distances of approximately 9 metres. There would be a minor impact on no.78's rear garden due to the marginal set back of the proposed dwelling but the size of the neighbouring properties garden ensures that only a small section would be impacted that would not be adverse.

Turning to the impact on no.78a, there would be two small secondary/non-habitable rooms on its western elevation minorly impacted by the new dwelling but providing a 1 metre separation distance is secured and the dwelling maintains a maximum ridge height of 7.3 metres, the overbearing impact would be minimal and acceptable.

Loss of Light:

No 78 and 78a's gardens are both primarily south facing. As the new dwelling would largely align with the neighbouring properties' rear and front elevations, there are no anticipated adverse loss of light impacts to these neighbouring dwellings. There may be a minor loss of light to the small secondary/non-habitable rooms on no.78a's western elevation in the early hours of the morning but due to the minimal amenity value, the impact on them would be acceptable.

Final details of the dwelling design will ultimately determine the loss of light impact on the adjacent properties, dealt with at the Reserved Matters stage.

Noise:

There are no anticipated adverse noise impacts. Concerns have been raised regarding increased delivery traffic, but this would negligibly harm the amenities of adjoining properties, as any noise activity is irregular and generally limited in terms of timeframe.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

Access, Highways Safety and Parking:

WBC Highways have no objections to the use of the existing access and anticipate no adverse impacts on Highway Safety due to the negligible increase in vehicle movements.

The proposed level of parking, and the submitted swept path and turning of the fire tender are acceptable.

Final parking and turning details, plus cycle storage, will be secured via condition. The Construction Environmental Management Plan will also appropriately deal with the parking of construction vehicles to ensure no impacts on the shared access drive with nos.78 and 78a Barkham Ride.

Refuse Collection:

The existing refuse collection strategy for the existing dwellings would be adopted for the new dwelling. This is acceptable. A refuse strategy will be expected/requested at Reserved Matters stage.

Amenity Space:

The proposed garden space far exceeds the Borough Design Guide 11 metre minimum, as would the reduced garden space for no.78 Barkham Ride. This is acceptable.

Flooding and Drainage:

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and at low risk of surface water flooding. WBC Drainage have no objections to the proposals providing a drainage strategy is secured via condition.

Landscape and Trees:

WBC Landscape and Trees have no objections on landscape character grounds.

In terms of Arboricultural matters, with the exception of the few small hedges and

trees that are being removed in the rear garden, the rest of the vegetation is well distanced away from the development proposed and could be adequately protected throughout the construction process.

An Arboricultural Method Statement will be secured via condition, pursuant of the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

Ecology:

Newts:

The site is located within a Green Risk Zone for Great Crested Newts, the lowest risk zone. The proposed development is therefore highly unlikely to result in any adverse impacts to this protected species.

Bats:

This application is supported by a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (John Wenman Ecology, April 2025) that has assessed the roost potential for the outbuildings and garage to be demolished. The results of the survey showed that these structures had negligible potential for bats and no further survey action is needed.

A Construction Environmental Management Plan will be secured via condition, and the standard bat informative will be added as a precaution.

Biodiversity Net Gain:

As of 2nd April 2024, a 10% Biodiversity net gain (BNG) for minor developments is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021). This can be achieved through either on-site or off-site mitigation.

Whilst the objections from WBC Ecology on the initial biodiversity net gain baseline, it was clarified by the applicant that the proposal is a self-build. As the proposed development is a self-build dwelling, the development is exempt from mandatory biodiversity net gains. That said, a pre-occupation condition will be imposed ensuring that a selection of biodiversity enhancements are still implemented around the property/garden to aid the ecological permeability of the site.

Affordable Housing:

The scale of the development and site do not warrant Affordable Housing contributions as per CP5 of the Core Strategy.

Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area:

Policy CP8 states that where there is a net increase in dwellings within 5km of the SPA, contributions to access management measures and monitoring in line with the Delivery Framework will be required.

The proposal is located within 5km of the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area and therefore meets the threshold required to mitigate its impact on this through contributing to the Council's mitigation strategy as per policy CP8 of the Core Strategy. The Appropriate Assessment relevant to this application is outlined below. Such contributions have been appropriately secured via a S106 Legal Agreement.

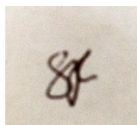
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

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.

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, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. 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.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approval
Date:	8 December 2025
Earliest date for decision:	30 April 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	8.12.25

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017**Screening Assessment and Appropriate Assessment**

In the light of the “Sweetman Judgement” (People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta, April 2018), the comments below comprise an Appropriate Assessment which includes advice on necessary avoidance and mitigation measures which is consistent with the advice provided to the Planning Inspectorate on such matters.

Summary of Response

WBC, in consultation with Natural England, has formed the view that any net increase in residential development between 400m and 5km straight-line distance from the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (SPA) is likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of the SPA, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. An Appropriate Assessment has been carried out which includes regard to mitigation

requirements.

This site is located approximately **4.2 km** (measured from the access road to the application site) from the boundary of the SPA and therefore is likely to result in an adverse effect on the SPA, unless it is carried out together with appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures.

On commencement of the proposed development, a contribution (calculated on a per-bedroom basis) is to be paid to Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) towards the cost of measures to avoid and mitigate against the effect upon the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, as set out in WBC's Infrastructure Delivery Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The strategy is for relevant developments to make financial contributions towards the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) in perpetuity as an alternative recreational location to the SPA and financial contributions towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) measures.

In this instance, the proposed development would result in a net increase of **1no. 4 bedroom dwelling** within 5km of the SPA which results in a total SANG contribution of **£3,546.86**.

The proposed development is required to make a contribution towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) which is also calculated on a per bedroom basis. Taking account of the per bedroom contributions this results in a total SAMM contribution of **£1,225.00**.

The total SPA related financial contribution for this proposal is **£4,771.86**. The applicant **must agree** to enter into a S106/s111 agreement to secure this contribution prior to occupation of each dwelling. Subject to the completion of the S106 agreement, the proposal would not lead to an adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA and would comply with SEP Saved Policy NRM6, policy CP8 of the Core Strategy, and the NPPF.

1. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) as amended

In accordance with The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) as amended, Regulation 63, a competent authority (in this case Wokingham Borough Council (WBC)), before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which—

- a. is likely to have a significant effect on a European site...(either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and
- b. is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site.

must make an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan or project for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives.

A person applying for any such consent, permission or other authorisation must provide such information as WBC may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment or to enable it to determine whether an appropriate assessment is required.

WBC must for the purposes of the assessment consult Natural England (NE) and have regard to any representations made by that body. It must also, if it considers it appropriate, take the opinion of the general public, and if it does so, it must take such steps for that

purpose as it considers appropriate. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment, and subject to Regulation 64 (Considerations of overriding public interest), WBC may agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site.

In considering whether a plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of the site, WBC must have regard to the manner in which it is proposed to be carried out or to any conditions or restrictions subject to which it proposes that the consent, permission or other authorisation should be given.

2. Stage 1 Screening for Likely Significant Effects

WBC accepts that this proposal is a 'plan or project' which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site. The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) is a European designated site which affects the borough, and WBC must ensure that development does not result in an adverse impact on the SPA. The potential adverse effects on the integrity of the SPA include recreational activities from inside the SPA and air pollution from inside and outside the SPA.

At this stage WBC cannot rule out 'likely significance effects' on the SPA (alone or in combination with other plans or projects) because the proposal could undermine the Conservation Objectives of these sites. This is because the proposal lies within **4.2 km** of the SPA and:

- represents a net increase in dwellings within 400m - 5km of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) which will lead to an increase in local population and a potential increase in recreational activity on the SPA

As the 'likely significance effects' cannot be ruled out at this stage an Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken.

3. Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment

Based on the information proposed by the applicant, WBC must decide whether or not an adverse effect on site integrity (alone or in combination with other plans or projects) can be ruled out. Mitigation may be able to be provided so that the proposal is altered to avoid or reduce impacts.

The following policies and guidance set out WBC's approach to relevant avoidance and mitigation measures which have been agreed with Natural England. For the majority of housing developments this will comprise the provision of (or contribution towards) Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and a contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) Project. The financial contributions towards SANG would be either through an obligation in a s106 agreement that requires WBC to allocate an appropriate amount of the development CIL receipt towards the provision of SANG, or through an obligation in an agreement under s111 of the Local Government Act, that requires the developer to make an appropriate financial contribution towards the provision of SANG (to be used in the event that the developer successfully seeks CIL relief). Developers will be required to secure an appropriate financial contribution to the SAMM project through an obligation in a s106 agreement.

For SDL development (and occasionally some other larger non SDL developments) within 5km of the SPA, SANG is required at a minimum of 8 ha per 1,000 new residents, constructed and delivered to Natural England's quality and quantity standards and a

contribution towards pan SPA access management and monitoring (as advised by the Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board). For SDL development (and occasionally some other larger non SDL developments) between 5 and 7km, the proposals will need to be individually assessed but it is likely that SANG will be required on site in line with Natural England's quality and quantity standards, although the exact requirement will be agreed having regard to evidence supplied.

a. Policies and Guidance

For this proposal the following guidance and policies apply:

- South East Plan (May 2009) Policy NRM6 (Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area)
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100528160926/http://www.gos.gov.uk/gos/e/planning/regionalPlanning/815640/>
- Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) Policy CP8 (Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area) sets out the approach WBC will take in order to protect the TBH SPA
<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2023-06/Final%20adopted%20Core%20Strategy%20inc.%20cover.pdf>
- Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) Policy CP7 (Biodiversity) sets out the approach WBC will take in order to protect national and international nature conservation sites
<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2023-06/Final%20adopted%20Core%20Strategy%20inc.%20cover.pdf>
- Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014) Policy TB23 (Biodiversity and Development)
<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2023-06/Adopted%20MDD.pdf>
- Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD (2011)
<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2023-06/Adopted%20Infrastructure%20De~nd%20Contributions%20SPD.pdf>

The project as proposed would not adversely impact on the integrity of the SPA if avoidance and mitigation measures are provided as stipulated by these policies and guidance.

b. SPA Avoidance and Mitigation Measures

i) The provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and its ongoing maintenance in perpetuity.

In accordance with the development plan, the proposed development will be required to provide alternative land to attract new residents away from the SPA. The term given to this alternative land is Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).

As this development is not part of an SDL, the developer may make a payment contribution towards strategic SANGs in line with schedule below (most likely this will be at Rooks Nest Wood SANG although it is subject to SANGs capacity in the right location within Wokingham borough). An occupation restriction will be included in the Section 106 Agreement in order to ensure that the contribution has been made prior to occupation of the dwellings. This gives the certainty required to satisfy the Habitats Regulations in accordance with South East Plan Policy NRM6 (iii) and Core Strategy Policy CP8

The development will result in a net increase of **1no. dwelling**, broken down as follows: **1no. 4 bedroom dwelling**. Depending on the dwelling mix, the level of SANG payments are set out as follows:

No. of bedrooms	SANG Contribution 5km	Aggregate SANG Contribution
1 bedroom	£1,567.98	£0
2 bedrooms	£2,049.59	£0
3 bedrooms	£2,690.93	£0
4 bedrooms	£3,546.86	£3,546.86
5 bedrooms	£4,240.62	£0
Total SANG Contribution		£3,546.86

[DELETE AS APPROPRIATE]

ii. Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) Contribution

The proposed development will also be required to make a contribution towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM). This project funds strategic visitor access management measures on the SPA to mitigate the effects of new development on it.

From 1st April 2023 SAMM contributions have been updated across the 11 Local Authorities affected by the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Following engagement with Natural England, the Joint Strategic Partnership Board agreed this change is necessary to ensure sufficient income is raised to cover the costs of the SAMM project in perpetuity. Without this change the SAMM project would be at risk of being unable to deliver the objectives of the SAMM project, and therefore secure positive outcomes for the SPA

The level of contributions are calculated on a per bedroom basis. The application for this development is for **1no. 4 bedroom dwelling**. Depending on the dwelling mix, the level of SAMM payments are calculated as follows:

No. of bedrooms	SAMM Contribution 5km	Aggregate SAMM Contribution
1 bedroom	£563.00	£0
2 bedrooms	£784.00	£0
3 bedrooms	£1,042.00	£0
4 bedrooms	£1,225.00	£1,225.00
5+ bedrooms	£1,400.00	£0
Total SAMM Contribution		£1,225.00

Prior to the permission being granted the applicant must enter into a Section 106 Agreement based upon the above measures.

4. Conclusion

An Appropriate Assessment has been carried out for this development in accordance with the Habitats Regulations 2017. Without any appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures the Appropriate Assessment concludes that the development is likely to have a significant effect upon the integrity of the SPA with the result that WBC would be required to refuse a planning application.

Provided that the applicant is prepared to make a financial contribution (see above) towards the costs of SPA avoidance and mitigation measures, the application will be in accordance with the SPA mitigation requirements as set out in the relevant policies above.

WBC is convinced, following consultation with Natural England, that the above measures will prevent an adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA. Pursuant to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and Regulation 63(5) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) as amended, and permission may be granted.

If the applicant does not agree with the above mitigation and does not enter into a Section 106 Agreement to secure the measures, then the application must be refused using the following reason for refusal.

5. Example Reason for Refusal

In the absence of a planning obligation to secure suitable avoidance and mitigation measures and access management monitoring arrangements, in terms that are satisfactory to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), the LPA is unable to satisfy itself that the proposals include adequate mitigation measures to prevent the proposed development from having an adverse effect on the integrity of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, in line with the requirements of Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended and Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43/EEC. The proposal would be contrary to Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan, Policies CP8 and CP4 of the Core Strategy.

Date:	05/12/2025	Signed:	<i>Kieran Neumann</i>
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