

# MEMORANDUM

|                             |                                                                                                          |                |        |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| <b>From:</b>                | Louise Aparo<br>Ecology Officer                                                                          |                |        |
| <b>Service</b>              | WBC Ecology                                                                                              | <b>App No:</b> | 261060 |
| <b>Address:</b>             | Pine Copse Boarding Kennels, Pineridge F, Nine Mile Ride, Wokingham, RG40 3LU.                           |                |        |
| <b>Proposal:</b>            | Full application for the erection of stables, tack room, trap storage and hay store.(part-retrospective) |                |        |
| <b>Type of Development:</b> | Minor All other developments                                                                             |                |        |
| <b>Site Visit Made:</b>     | Yes/No                                                                                                   |                |        |

## Summary Of Recommendations

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

## Comments On Proposal

### Biodiversity Net Gain

No ecological reports have been submitted in support of this application. The Planning Statement (ET Planning, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2026) advises that the development is exempt from the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements. I agree with this position, as the application is retrospective and therefore is exempt from the mandatory BNG provisions.

However, Chapter 15, Paragraph 193(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires planning decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural environment by minimising impacts on, and providing net gains for, biodiversity. It is therefore considered proportionate and reasonable to require the submission of a biodiversity metric demonstrating the baseline habitat value and the post-development habitat value of the site. Whilst a 10% net gain would not be required in this instance, the metric should demonstrate that the development delivers a measurable biodiversity gain in accordance with national planning policy.

### Biodiversity enhancements

The Planning Statement further indicates that biodiversity enhancements can be secured through planning conditions. In principle, I agree with this approach. However, site photographs suggest that tree clearance has recently taken place within the application site. No ecological information has been provided to

demonstrate whether these trees were assessed for their potential to support nesting birds or roosting bats prior to removal.

Whilst there is currently no evidence to indicate that offences have occurred under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 in relation to nesting birds, or under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 in relation to bats, the absence of ecological evidence means it cannot be confirmed whether protected species considerations were appropriately addressed prior to the works being undertaken.

Given the apparent loss of tree habitat and thus habitat for bats and birds, a precautionary approach is considered appropriate. To compensate for the loss of potential nesting and roosting habitat, it is recommended that enhanced biodiversity measures are secured. Rather than the standard enhancement provision, compensation should comprise:

- Two integrated or externally mounted bat boxes; and
- Two integrated or externally mounted bird boxes

I recommend securing such enhancements with a species compensation and enhancement condition.

### **Lighting – Foraging bats**

All bats and their roosts are legally protected by national and European legislation including Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Additionally, several species of bats are a priority species under the NERC Act 2016. These legislations make it illegal to deliberately disturb a bay, capture/kill or injure a bat or disturb a breeding or resting site.

The application site is situated within suitable roosting habitat according to our internal database. The site is located adjacent to a railway track to the west; pockets of lowland deciduous woodland surround the site and lowland fens to the south. These surrounding habitats are likely to provide commuting, foraging and roosting habitat. As such, with the site located in the middle of such habitats, artificial lighting could interrupt foraging and commuting routes.

Given the location a sensitive lighting plan will be required. The height of the building, when combined with integrated lighting positioned at higher wall levels, has the potential to illuminate surrounding trees on site, which could disrupt commuting corridors and negatively impact light-sensitive species.

The sensitive Lighting Plan should detail the location, type, and specification of all proposed lighting. This plan should follow the *Bat Conservation Trust Guidance Note 08: Bats and Artificial Lighting*. It is recommended that a Lighting Design Strategy for Light-Sensitive Biodiversity condition be required to secure details of the lighting plan.

### **Conditions & Reasons (if required)**

#### **Species Compensation and Enhancement Condition**

Condition: Prior to construction, a scheme for ecological permeability and biodiversity compensation and enhancement, such as the incorporation of

two permanent bat roosting feature(s) and two permanent bird boxes shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The approved details thereafter shall be implemented, retained and maintained for their designed purpose in accordance with the approved scheme. The scheme shall include, but not limited to, the following details:

- a) Description, design or specification of the type of feature(s) or measure(s) to be undertaken;
- b) Materials and construction to ensure long lifespan of the feature/measure
- c) A drawing(s) showing the location and where appropriate the elevation of the features or measures to be installed or undertaken.
- d) When the features or measures will be installed within the construction, occupation, or phase of the development.

**Reason:** To ensure the development is policy compliant with regards to Policy TB23: Biodiversity and Development of the Wokingham Borough Development Plan.

**Lighting design strategy for light-sensitive biodiversity – Condition**

Prior to occupation, a “lighting design strategy for biodiversity” for buildings, features or areas to be lit shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall:

- a. identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their breeding sites and resting places or along important routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging; and
- b. show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the strategy, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority

**Reason:** To policy compliance with national legalisation Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and Wokingham Core Strategy, Policy CP7.

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| <b>Date:</b> | 17/07/26 | <b>Signed:</b> | L.Aparo |
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