

MEMORANDUM

From:	Louise Aparo Ecology Officer		
Service	WBC Ecology	App No:	260800
Address:	Greenways Bridge (culvert) Riverside Park, Woosehill, Wokingham..		
Proposal:	Full application to replace a culvert with a 3.45m clear span and 3.5m clear width footbridge, including the removal of 7 no. trees.		
Type of Development:	Minor All other developments		
Site Visit Made:	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

I have reviewed the following documents submitted to support this application:

- Flood Risk Technical Note, March 2026, Version 1.0 by South East Rivers Trust
- Biodiversity Statement, March 2026, Version 1.0 by South East Rivers Trust
- Ground Level Tree Assessment, March 2026 by John Wiseman Ecology
- Environmental Risk Assessment, Version 1.0 by South East River Trust.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The submitted Biodiversity Net Gain assessment identifies the tree removal as woodland enhancement through coppice management rather than a permanent loss of habitat. The extent of tree removal is limited, the affected trees have been clearly identified on the submitted plans, and there is no requirement for ongoing habitat creation, enhancement, or monitoring to secure the biodiversity outcome. Consequently, a separate Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan is not considered necessary in this instance

The submitted Biodiversity Net Gain assessment demonstrates that the proposal achieves a biodiversity net gain in excess of the mandatory 10% requirement and is therefore considered compliant with the Biodiversity Gain Condition and relevant national legislation.

Whilst the proposals include the removal of seven trees, this has been assessed within the BNG metric as part of a woodland enhancement through coppicing and woodland management, rather than as a standalone habitat loss. The trees proposed for removal are clearly identified on the submitted plans (Tree Protection Plan, 4th February 2021) and no additional habitat creation or long-term habitat management measures are proposed beyond those assessed within the BNG submission.

The extent of habitat enhancement is limited, and there is no requirement for ongoing habitat creation, enhancement, or monitoring to secure the biodiversity outcome. Consequently, a separate Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan is not considered necessary in this instance. Instead, a compliance condition will be recommended.

Protected Species

Bats

As the proposal involves the removal of seven trees within habitat considered suitable for roosting bats, a ground-level tree assessment was undertaken. The assessment was completed in accordance with recognised best practice guidance and provides an appropriate level of survey effort and supporting evidence. The survey identified three trees containing Potential Roost Features (PRF-1). Of these trees, only T29 forms part of the current planning application.

The applicant's ecologist has proposed a precautionary Method Statement for the removal of T29, including a toolbox talk for all contractors, inspection of the tree immediately prior to removal by a suitably qualified ecologist, and the use of soft-felling techniques. I consider these precautionary measures to be proportionate to the level of risk identified and sufficient to avoid impacts to bats. I therefore recommend that the Method Statement is secured through a compliance condition.

Breeding birds

The trees proposed for removal provide suitable nesting habitat for breeding birds. All wild birds, their active nests and dependent young are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

The Environmental Risk Assessment submitted by the South East Rivers Trust confirms that a nesting bird check will be undertaken by a suitably qualified persons immediately prior to the commencement of works. Should any active nests be identified, works within the affected area will cease and an appropriate exclusion zone implemented until nesting activity has concluded. I agree that these measures are necessary and proportionate and will ensure compliance with relevant wildlife legislation and national and local planning policy.

Other Protected and Priority Species

The proposed development is limited in scale and nature and is not anticipated to result in significant or long-term adverse impacts to protected or priority species. Accordingly, species-specific long-term mitigation or compensation measures are not considered necessary.

The Environmental Risk Assessment includes a commitment to undertake a pre-works walkover survey to identify any protected or priority species that may be using the site immediately prior to the commencement of works. I consider this approach to be appropriate and sufficient to minimise the risk of harm during construction.

Biodiversity Enhancements

The biodiversity statement indicates that the to compensate for the loss of the trees on site, and therefore the roost potential, two bat boxes are to be installed on neighbouring mature trees. Additionally the report indicates that the tree to be felled will be retained for deadwood. These enhancements comply with the Wokingham Borough Development Plan, Policy TB23. To secure these enhancements I recommend a Species Compensation and Enhancement Condition condition.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)

Compliance with existing detailed biodiversity method statements, strategies, plans and schemes – Condition

All ecological measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in Biodiversity Statement (March 2026, Version 1.0, South East Rivers Trust), the Ground Level Tree Assessment (March 2026, John Wiseman Ecology) and the Environmental Risk Assessment (Version 1.0, South East River Trust) as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination.

Reason: To ensure the development is policy compliant with Wokingham Core Strategy, CP7, the Wildlife and Countryside Act and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

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) on mature trees and the placement of deadwood 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.

Date:

Signed: