

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Application Number:	261150
Site Address:	Inspire Childrens Day Nurseries, Rances Lane, Wokingham, RG40 2LH
Expiry Date:	14 August 2026
Site Visit Date:	14 July 2026
Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of a single storey front extension to building and installation of air conditioning units along with changes to fenestration following demolition of existing front extension.	

PLANNING POLICY	
National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP2 – Inclusive Communities CP3 – General Principles for Development CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP15 – Employment Development
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 CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation DM3 - Protection of Habitats and Species DM9 - Protecting Health, Safety and Amenity DM12 - Sustainable Transport Movements DM15 - Site History
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	SS1 – Sustainable development principles SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy SS3 – Development within or adjacent to major and modest settlements CE1 – Design principles for efficient buildings CE2 – Environmental standards for non-residential development CE6 – Reducing energy consumption in existing buildings C1 – Active and sustainable transport and accessibility C2 – Mitigation of transport impacts and highway safety and design

	C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging FD1 – Development and flood risk (from all sources) FD2 – Sustainable drainage NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity NE5 – Landscape and design DH1 – Place making and quality design DH2 – Safeguarding amenity HC1 – Promoting healthy communities HC5 – Environmental protection HC6 – Air pollution and air quality HC7 – Light pollution HC8 – Noise pollution HC10 – Odor, fumes and dust
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
10665	Covered play area for physically handicapped children.	Approved 04/05/1979
21873	Single storey extension to provide garage for school minibus.	Approved 18/09/1984
29155	Extension to proposed day centre for the physically handicapped and additional car parking.	Approved 17/03/1988
260244	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed use of the site within Use Class E(f).	Approved 12/03/2026

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Property Services – No comments received
WBC Environmental Health – No objection subject to conditions.
WBC Drainage – No objection subject to conditions. *Officer comments: This will be discussed within the main report.*
WBC Highways – No objection.
WBC Ecology – No comments received
WBC Waste Services – No comments received
WBC Cleaner and Greener – No comments received

External

None

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No comments received
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Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	Three neighbours have commented on this application and their concerns are summarised and responded to below: • Car pollution from the nursery being open all day. <i>Officer comments: It is not anticipated that cars arriving to the nursery would cause unacceptable levels of pollution.</i> • Waste disposal. <i>Officer comments: This application relates to a front extension and AC units. The proposal is limited to physical alterations to the building and installation of plant equipment and would not materially affect the site's waste management arrangements.</i> • Residents on Chetwode Close will be fully exposed to the AC units, and front facing units should be relocated or housed in suitable acoustic enclosures. <i>Officer comments: This will be assessed within the 'Neighbouring Amenity' section of the main report.</i> • The change of use to a nursery will result in cars arriving early which will cause noise disturbance, also the noise levels from children. <i>Officer comments: This application does not seek permission for a change of use and the lawful use of the site has already been established through the grant of a Certificate of Lawfulness. The proposal therefore does not provide an opportunity to reassess impacts arising from the operation of the nursery use..</i> • Impacts upon the visual character of the area. <i>Officer comments: This will be assessed within the 'Character of the Area' section of the main report.</i> • The plans do not state what time the nursery should open, but it should not be before 8am. Additionally, it should not be open on weekends or bank holidays. <i>Officer comments: This application relates to a front extension and AC units. The proposal does not seek to alter the lawful operating characteristics of the use and therefore opening hours do not fall to be considered as part of this application.</i>

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site comprises an existing single storey building located to the West of Rances Lane. The building is set within a substantial plot, approximately 0.4 hectares in area, and is set back from Rances Lane behind a hard-surfaced parking and drop-off area. The building is predominantly constructed of buff brick with shallow pitched roofs and sections of white weatherboarding to gable elevations.

The site contains a mix of hardstanding, landscaped areas, mature trees and boundary vegetation. Areas of external amenity space are located around the building, including courtyard areas and grassed spaces. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character, with dwellings located to the north, east and south of the site, whilst St Crispin's School lies to the west.

Description of Development:

This application seeks permission for the proposed erection of a single storey front extension following demolition of the existing front extension. Plus, the installation of 11no. air conditioning units, and changes to fenestration.

Principle of Development:

The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 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.

The site is located within settlement limits and as such the development should be acceptable 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.

Character of the Area:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy requires development to be appropriate in terms of its scale, appearance and relationship with its surroundings. Policy CC04 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan seeks high-quality design which responds positively to local character and distinctiveness.

The proposed development comprises the replacement of an existing front extension with a new single-storey front extension, together with alterations to the fenestration and the installation of external air conditioning units. The proposed extension would be located on the principal elevation of the building but would remain contained within the established footprint and form of the existing frontage. The submitted elevations demonstrate that the extension would not project significantly beyond the existing built form or create a prominent or incongruous addition when viewed from within the site or the wider street scene. The extension incorporates a contemporary entrance feature and materials which complement the existing building.

In visual terms, the impact of the extension is further reduced by the siting of the building within the plot. The building is located well back from Rances Lane behind the existing parking area, meaning that views of the development from the public realm are limited and generally experienced from a distance. As a consequence, the proposal would not materially alter the appearance of the site within the wider street scene or have any adverse effect on the character of the surrounding area.

The proposal also includes the installation of external air conditioning units. The submitted details indicate that the majority of these units would be positioned at low level within existing recesses to the side and rear of the building, with screening provided to form enclosed plant areas and reduce visibility. The supporting overview layout confirms that the plant has been relocated away from more visually sensitive locations and concentrated within screened compounds designed to limit visual impact.

Given their limited scale, low-level siting and location within recessed parts of the building, the proposed air conditioning units would not be readily visible from public vantage points and would not appear as prominent features within the site. As such, they are not considered to result in any material harm to the character or appearance of either the site or the surrounding area.

The proposed fenestration changes will see some of the existing windows being replaced with doors. The new doors are in the location of the existing windows and as such the fenestration changes pose no harm to the appearance of the building or wider character of the area.

For these reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area and would comply with Policies CP3 of the Core Strategy and CC04 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy requires development to be of an appropriate design which does not result in detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

The application site is surrounded by residential properties to the north, east and south. The proposal comprises the replacement of an existing front extension with a new single-storey front extension, together with alterations to fenestration and the installation of external air conditioning units. The proposed extension is modest in scale and is located to the front of the existing building. Given its single-storey nature and position within the established footprint of the site, the extension would not result in any unacceptable overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of light, overshadowing or overbearing impacts upon neighbouring residential occupiers.

Whilst concerns have been raised by neighbouring residents regarding the installation of the air conditioning units, the submitted details indicate that the units would be positioned predominantly within recessed areas to the side and rear of the building, with screening proposed around the plant areas. The visual impact of the units has been assessed within the Character of the Area section of this report and found to be acceptable.

In considering the potential noise impacts associated with the operation of the air conditioning units, the Council's Environmental Health Officer was consulted and raised no objection to the development subject to the imposition of a condition controlling noise emissions from the plant. The EH Officer noted that whilst no acoustic assessment had been submitted, any potential impacts arising from the operation of the units could be satisfactorily mitigated through the recommended condition requiring

that the rating level of noise emitted from all fixed plant and machinery does not exceed the existing background noise level, or 10dB below where there is a particular tonal quality, when measured at the nearest residential or noise-sensitive property. The EH Officer therefore concluded that the proposal is acceptable subject to this condition. Subject to the recommended condition, the operation of the plant would not result in unacceptable noise impacts upon neighbouring occupiers.

The EH Officer also advised that whilst there may be limited temporary disturbance during the construction phase, any such impacts would be short-term in nature and capable of being appropriately managed through standard construction practices. The scale of development proposed is relatively modest and does not give rise to concerns in this regard.

The proposed fenestration changes are seeing some windows replaced with doors, and it is not anticipated that this would have any impact upon neighbouring amenities.

Taking the above into account, it is considered that the proposed development would not result in unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and would comply with Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy.

Drainage:

The Council's Drainage Officer was consulted on this application and they have no objection to the principle of the development, subject to a surface water disposal condition. The site is located within flood zone 1 and given the limited nature of the works proposed that would not significantly alter the requirements for surface water drainage on the site, it is not considered necessary or reasonable to impose such a condition. Accordingly, the condition is not recommended.

Conclusion:

For the reasons stated above, the proposal is acceptable in respect of design, character, neighbour amenity, drainage and biodiversity considerations, complies with the relevant policies of the Development Plan and is therefore recommended for approval.

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 reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. 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.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

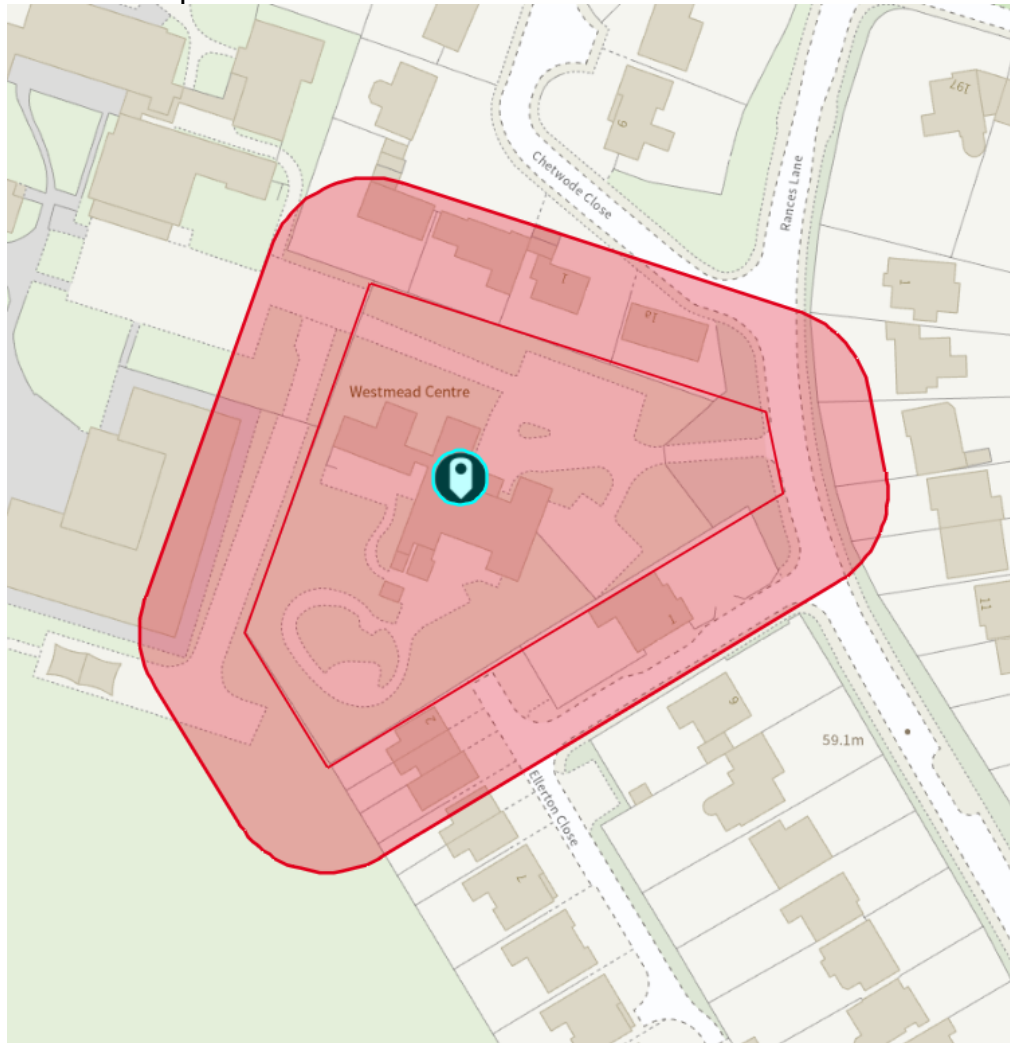
When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

RECOMMENDATION	
Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	13 August 2026
Earliest date for decision:	9 July 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	13/08/26

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Near Me Report



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Affordable Housing Thresholds | Total count: 3

#	NAME
1	Within Major Development Locations
2	Within Major Development Locations
3	Within All Development Locations

Scale and Location of Development Proposals | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	NAME
1	Major Development Locations	Wokingham

Thames Basin Heath SPA Mitigation Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME
1	Special Protection Area Linear Mitigation Zone	5km Linear Mitigation Zone

Major Nuclear Sites Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	PLANNING_NOTE
1	Consultation Zone - Major Nuclear Site	AWE: Special Case Zone	ONR also requests to be consulted on planning applications, irrespective of distance from nuclear sites, for special cases. Developments that either introduce a new hazard or change the existing external hazards posed to nuclear sites.

Aerodrome Safeguarding: Gatwick Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	Description
1	Please consult London Gatwick on the following: All buildings, structures & works exceeding 150 m AGL.

Aerodrome Safeguarding: Heathrow Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	Height Band	Wind Turbine	Aviation
1	All works exceeding 150 metres (492.1 feet)	YES	YES

Wokingham Borough Council Owned Land | Total count: 2

#	Address	Tenure	Title_no
1	St Crispins School and Westende School, Wokingham	Absolute Freehold Estate in Land	BK403020
2	St Crispins School and Westende School, Wokingham	Absolute Freehold Estate in Land	BK403020

Wokingham Borough Council Leased Land | Total count: 1

#	Address	DESCRIPTION
1	St Crispin's School London Road Wokingham	Academy Lease

Risk of Flooding from Surface Water | Total count: 16

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME
1	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 30 year risk extent
2	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 30 year risk extent
3	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 30 year risk extent
4	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 30 year risk extent
5	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 100 year risk extent
6	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 100 year risk extent
7	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 100 year risk extent
8	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent
9	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent
10	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent
11	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent
12	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent
13	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent

14	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent
15	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent
16	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent

Bat Roost Habitat Suitability | Total count: 7

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	[F873	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
2	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	[F874	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
3	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	[F876	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
4	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	[G872	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
5	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	[G874	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
6	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	[H873	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team
7	Bat survey required for planning applications that involve roof modification or demolition.	[H875	Ecology Officer, Green Infrastructure Team

Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone	Amber	For Householder applications check HH Layer. Consult NatureSpace for all other types of development

SSSI Impact Risk Zones | Total count: 1

#	SSSI Impact Risk Zone Advice Hyperlink
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1	https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0300000430000&notes=11401&location=482386,169164%20(IRZ%20polygon%20centre)
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Water Utility Consultation Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT_WHEN
1	Water Utility Consultation Zone	South East Water Supply Area	New dwellings

Landscape Character Assessment 2019 | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	Name
1	Landscape Character Assessment 2019	Holme Green Pastoral Sandy Lowland

Wards | Total count: 1

#	Name of area	Closest Approximate Distance
1	Wescott Ward	0 m

Parishes | Total count: 1

#	Name of area	Closest Approximate Distance
1	Wokingham CP	0 m