

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	260800
Site Address:	Greenways Bridge (culvert) Riverside Park, Woosehill, Wokingham.
Expiry Date:	7 August 2026
Site Visit Date:	11 June 2026
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.	

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 CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements CP7 – Biodiversity CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
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 CC09 – Development and Flood Risk CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB21 – Landscape Character TB22 – Sites of Urban Landscape Value TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document Wokingham Town Centre SPD

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
203617	Full application for proposed works to reconnect a 340 metre length of historic river channel of the Emm Brook through Riverside Park, to bypass the existing weir. With associated excavation, silt removal/storage and landscaping works, plus the erection of 2 no. 8 metre x 3.5 metre wooden bridges to maintain existing access for pedestrians and	Approved 27/10/23

	maintenance vehicles, following removal of an existing piped culvert.	
250637	Full application for the proposed creation of a new wildlife pond.	Approved 23/07/25

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Property Services: No comments recieved

WBC Environmental Health: No objection

WBC Drainage: No objection

WBC Highways: No comment

WBC Landscape and Trees: No objection subject to conditions

WBC Public Rights Of Way: No comments recieved

WBC Ecology Newts: No objection

WBC Ecology: No objection subject to conditions

WBC Sports Development (Places and Neighbourhoods): No comments recieved

WBC Cleaner and Greener: No comments recieved

WBC Green Infrastructure: No objection

External

Natural England: No objection

Thames Water Utilities Ltd: No comments recieved

The Environment Agency: No objection subject to conditions

South East Water: No comment

Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust: No comments recieved

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	The Wokingham Town Council P&T Committee: Supports the application.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description: The application site is located in the northern portion of Riverside Park. The park broadly serves the residential community of Woosehill and is linked via paths to other areas of green infrastructure across the borough. Although Riverside Park is an urban park which backs onto residential development, such as 'Brookside', it has a tranquillity that would generally be associated with a rural area which informs its natural character.

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.

Policy CC02 of the MDD sets out the development limits for each settlement as defined on the policies map and therefore replaces the proposals map adopted through the Core Strategy, as per the requirement of policy CP9. Policy CP9 sets out that development proposals located within development limits will be acceptable in principle, having regard to the service provisions associated with the major, modest and limited categories. As the site is within a major development location, the proposal is acceptable in principle.

Character of the Area: The proposed footbridge consists of hardwood timber with a total length of 4.1m and 3.5m clear width. The bridge shall be integrated with the existing footpaths through local regrading of the adjacent paths with access ramps constructed from imported or site won fill, as required. Demountable bollards shall be placed at either end of the bridge to prohibit unauthorised vehicles accessing the footbridge.

The use of hardwood timber respects the wooded nature of the site and is considered to visually contribute to the river when viewed from publicly accessible land. Furthermore, such type of infrastructure is common within riverside settings and would integrate appropriately with the setting, thus not harming the character of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity: Given the nature of the proposal and distance from dwellings, it would not result cause any overlooking, loss of light and overbearing concerns.

Environmental Health: The Environmental Risk Assessment identifies potential construction risks and sets out appropriate mitigation measures.

Construction activities will be temporary in nature. Proposed working hours (08:00–

18:00) are considered reasonable, and given the scale and nature of the works, it is not considered that there will be a significant impact on residential amenity.

Environmental Health raises no objection to the proposed development.

Flooding and Drainage: The development proposes replacing an existing bridge culvert with a clear span bridge, as represented by existing and proposed profile drawing A120099-TGEE ZZ-XX-DR-C-0103-P02 dated 17/04/2026.

The WBC drainage officer has no objection to the development, as represented by the above- mentioned drawing. The development is proposed on an Ordinary Watercourse and may require Ordinary Watercourse Consent (OWC).

Ecology Newts: The Ecology officer is satisfied that if this application was to be approved then it would be unlikely to have any impact upon great crested newts and/or their habitats. An informative has been included within the decision notice.

Landscape and Trees: The site is located in Woosehill Meadows a Local Wildlife Site, which also contains a woodland/orchard and Parkland. The site is within the Wokingham settlement/development area and is a well-used park with woodland and trees and the river Emm Brook.

The proposals include the removal of an existing culvert and its replacement with a 3.45m clear span and 3.5m clear width footbridge known as Greenways Bridge. 2 previous footbridges were included and approved under PA 203617. The culvert needs to be removed and replaced with a bridge to allow the water to flow freely.

The arboricultural character of the site and surroundings includes several large mature Oak trees and many riverside Alders, and understorey shrubs of varying quality including Elm regeneration. There is a more densely wooded patch to the north which is becoming heavily ivy clad, and there a few individual trees of high arboricultural value. The trees have had little management over the years and the Alder has become over mature and some groups are in decline. There are patches of Elm which shows decline due to Dutch elm disease, and Poplar seedlings establishing which will likely be more successful out competing preferable species.

There are no protected trees on the site and it is not in a Conservation Area.

Tree removal to facilitate development includes; trees numbered 29, 52, 51, 50, 49, 48, 46 consisting of Alder, White Poplar, Ash, Hazel as shown on the Tree Protection Plan for Greenways Bridge – Drawing No. MW.21.0124.GB.TPP 20.3.25 which is acceptable.

Where work is within the wooded areas or within RPAs of trees ground protection will be used, such as Trackmat over woodchip. Where protection is required along stream banks Hazel or Chestnut faggots will be laid down under the excavator for activities such as silt excavation and spreading which provides a stable work platform. The faggots can be left in situ and used for biodiversity gains. This complies with Policy CC03 to protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features.

The following sequence of work is proposed:

1. Tree removals
2. Installation of tree protection barriers
3. Removal of existing bridge
4. Excavation for concrete supports
5. Casting of concrete supports or installation of pre-formed units
6. Footbridge replacement
7. Removal of barriers after all external construction work has been completed

A method for silt removal and stream side plant access is described on Page 16 of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement.

The WBC Trees and Landscape officer has no objection to the bridge design. The officer requires a condition to replace the trees/native understorey to replace vegetation lost to the removal of the culvert and the installation of the Greenways Bridge.

Ecology:

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. The officer considers these precautionary measures to be proportionate to the level of risk identified and sufficient to avoid impacts to bats. The officer therefore recommends that the Method Statement is secured through a compliance condition.

Protected Species- 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. The officer agrees 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. The officer considers 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 the officer has recommend a Species Compensation and Enhancement Condition.

Environment Agency: The proposed development will be acceptable provided that the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is included within the planning permission's decision notice.

A flood risk assessment condition was recommended, however following communication with the EA and given the flood risk assessment submitted does not

identify any mitigation measures that need to be secured by a planning condition. Given that the development has been assessed as acceptable without specific flood risk mitigation, such condition would not be necessary in this instance.

Natural England: Based on the plans submitted, it considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites or landscapes.

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 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.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approved
Date:	3 August 2026
Earliest date for decision:	3 June 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	4 August 2026

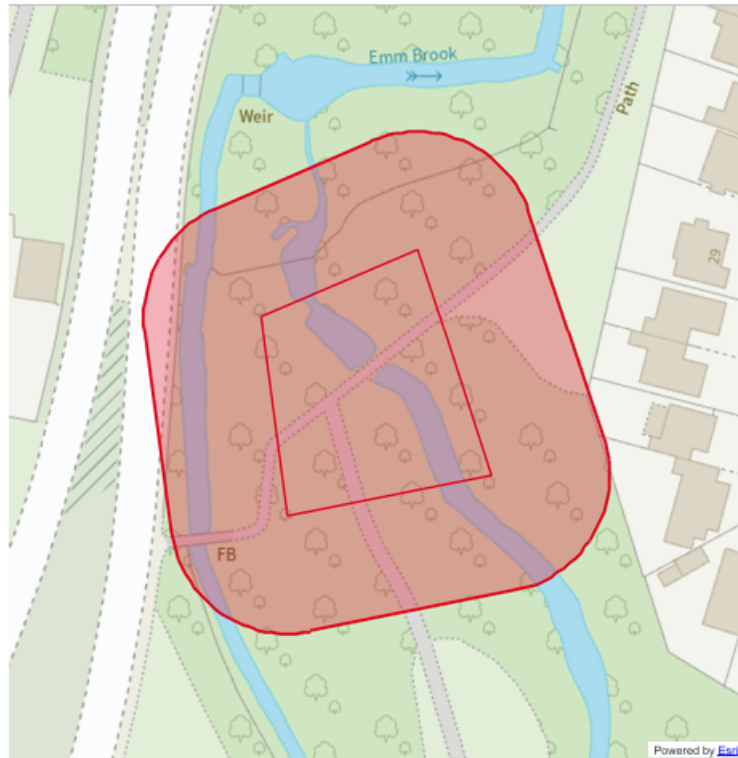
PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Near Me Report

Area of Interest (AOI) Information

Area: 5,190.76 m²

Date: Tue May 12 2026 16:55:09 GMT+0100 (British Summer Time)



No legend

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	7km Linear Mitigation Zone

Green Infrastructure Routes Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE
1	Proposed Riverside Footpath

Mineral Safeguarding Areas | Total count: 1

#	Type	SubType
1	Sharp Sand and Gravel	Sub-alluvial River Terrace deposits - Indicated resources in area assessed by BGS

Major Nuclear Sites Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	PLANNING_NOTE
1	Consultation Zone - Major Nuclear Site	AWE: 12km Zone	This is the 12km Zone. A circular zone of 12km radius around all nuclear sites, for certain types of significant development due to the potential for such developments to pose an external hazard to sites.

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	land on the south side of Reading Road, Wokingham	Absolute Freehold Estate in Land	BK51408
2	land on the west side of properties in Brookside, Wokingham	Absolute Freehold Estate in Land	BK404041

Flood Zones | Total count: 1

#	flood_zone
1	Flood Zone 3

Historic Flood Extent | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME
1	Environment Agency Historic Flood Outline	Historic Flood Map

Main River Consultation Area | Total count: 1

#	layer
1	Main River Consultation Area

Water Network Watercourse Consultation Zone | Total count: 2

#	watercourseName	form
1	No data	inlandRiver
2	Emm Brook	inlandRiver

Risk of Flooding from Surface Water | Total count: 3

#	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 100 year risk extent
3	Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Zones	1 in 1000 year risk extent

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

Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zones - Minor | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME	CONSULT
1	Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone	Amber	Consult NatureSpace for any minor development that intersects a red or amber zone in this layer

Local Wildlife Sites Consultation Zone | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	FEATURE_NAME
1	Local Wildlife Site	Woosehill Meadows

SSSI Impact Risk Zones | Total count: 1

#	SSSI Impact Risk Zone Advice Hyperlink
1	https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0300000530000&notes=11404&location=475984,168857%20(IRZ%20polygon%20centre)

Potentially Contaminated Land Zones | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	OBJECTID
1	Potentially Contaminated Land Consultation Zone	1

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

Grounds Maintenance Boundaries | Total count: 1

#	PPG17 TYPOLOGY	OWNER
1	Parks and Gardens	Wokingham Borough Council

Landscape Character Assessment 2019 | Total count: 1

#	FEATURE_TYPE	Name
1	Landscape Character Assessment 2019	Wokingham-Winnersh Settled and Farmed Clay

Wards | Total count: 1

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

Parishes | Total count: 1

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