

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	261198
Site Address:	Scarletts Lodge, Scarletts Lane, Hare Hatch, Wokingham, RG10 9XD
Expiry Date:	31 July 2026
Site Visit Date:	10 June 2026
Proposal: Full planning application for proposed erection of 1no. Hay and feed barn with associated machinery storage and hardstanding (part retrospective)	

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 CP7 – Biodiversity CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits CP12 – Green Belt
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development TB01 – Development within the Green Belt TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM5 - Protection of the Countryside DM6 - Green Belt
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
41436	Demolition of existing dwelling and replacement with new dwelling and garage	C/A
43093	Single storey rear extension to form Conservatory	C/A
F/1998/67285	Proposed First Floor extension to dwelling	Approved 16/06/98
022552	Proposed erection of looseboxes and tack room within residential curtilage.	Refused 15/04/02
020513	Proposed erection of 2 loose boxes with tack room and feed store.	Approved 08/10/02
090325	Creation of all weather surface for horse	Approved

	exercising within existing paddock.	28/08/09
161763	Demolition of existing Conservatory and erection of two storey rear extension	Approved 28/09/16
170711	Non-Material amendment to allow changes in windows and porch	Approved 08/05/17
171825	Householder application for proposed erection of single storey rear extension.	Approved 04/08/17

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Ecology Newts: No objection subject to conditions

WBC Ecology: No objection subject to conditions

WBC Green Infrastructure: No comment

WBC Trees & Landscape: No objection

External

Public Health England: No comment received

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Wargrave Parish Council has considered that this application may constitute an exception within usual Green Belt constraints and therefore raises no objection. Notwithstanding the above, this Council requests that a condition is applied to restrict the usage to the stated personal equine recreational use of the dominant property – Scarletts Lodge and that if no longer required the proposed development should be removed and the land reinstated in order to preserve the openness of the Green Belt that currently exists without the exception.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description: Detached dwelling with large driveway and detached garage surrounded a large garden (Blue line) and leading into fields and horse paddocks. Located in the countryside and green belt location of Hare Hatch. The property is located in a small private road that allows access to Scarletts Lodge, Scarletts Cottage and Scarletts Barn off Scaletts Lane, Hare Hatch.

Proposal: The proposed pitched roof, open sided barn will be sited on pads and on the existing hardstanding. The barn will be 6.0m by 14.0m and has a height to the ridge of 5.7m.

The applicants have a requirement for machinery for animal husbandry purposes and this comprises (see list below) and is required to tend the land holding and manage the paddocks. Additionally, the applicant's have a horse transporter which is around

8.0m in length and is stored on the site.

- A small tractor
- A dumper truck for transporting manure to the adjacent garden centre
- A field roller
- A topper
- A harrow
- A school rotovator to manage the manége

The animal husbandry is looking after the horses which is a daily operation including feeding, bedding, health awareness, exercising and putting in and out of stables, mucking out and cleaning, grooming. There are two horses on the site.

The machinery is stored in the open and would benefit in terms of longevity and to ease maintenance requirements, of being stored within the barn although this is not the primary function. More critically, the requirements for bedding and feed cannot be satisfied in the existing buildings and require regular deliveries to satisfy need. It is proposed to reduce the frequency of deliveries in the manner described below. The proposed barn will be used as follows:

- Haylage - 110 packages per annum per horse (30kg packages 0.5m x 0.4m x 0.8m) 0.16 cu m each
- Hay - 4 tons (20 large round bales) per annum per horse – 1.2m x 1.2m x 1.5m (2.1 cu m each)
- Bedding: chopped straw - 220 packages per horse per annum (0.8m x 0.4m x 0.4m – 0.15cu m each)
- Wood Chip Shavings 220 per annum per horse (0.8m x 0.4m x 0.9m 0.3 cu m each)
- Barley Straw Bales 50 per annum per horse
- Hard feed: say 250 bags per annum per horse - varying from Hi Fi (20kg per bag) High Fibre Nuts (20kg per bag), Bran etc + others.

When aggregated and allowing for appropriate stacking techniques which readily enables day to day use, the hay takes up around 18cu. m at 2.5m in height, a floor area of circa 45 sq m for 20 bales. This and the other storage requirements account for size of the barn as shown on the drawings.

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.

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.

Countryside: The site is located in the countryside and therefore must be assessed

against Policy CP11. The policy states that proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted except where:

- 1) It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and
- 2) It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and
- 3) It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement
- 4) In the case of residential extensions, does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.
- 5) In the case of replacement dwellings, the proposal must: i) Bring about environmental improvements; or ii) Not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building.
- 6) Essential community facilities cannot be accommodated within development limits or through the re-use/replacement of an existing building.
- 7) Affordable housing on rural exception sites in line with CP9.

In this case, expectations 1 to 2 apply. In the case of criteria 1, the proposal is a countryside-based activity and promotes recreation. Thus, criteria 1 is satisfied.

In the case of criteria 2, the barn is sited close to the existing stables and nearby dwelling thereby not considered to not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings. Thus, criteria 2 is satisfied.

Criteria 3 is not relevant to new buildings.

Therefore, the proposal complies with Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy.

Green Belt: Policy CP12 of the Core Policy Strategy states that planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts with national policies for the protection of Green Belt land covered by Chapter 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 142 of the NPPF states that, *“The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”*. Paragraph 143 of the NPPF states that the Green Belt serves 5 purposes, the one most relevant to this proposal is, “(c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment”.

Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that, *“When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting*

from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the following exceptions applies:

- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

The proposed barn would be used for to support the equestrian use at the site. Although the barn is of a substantial size and height, justification for this has been provided and due to its location between existing built development and on existing hardstanding and its open sided nature, it would preserve the openness of the Green. Therefore, it's not considered not inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Character of the Area:

Paragraph 187(b) of the NPPF requires that planning applications enhance the natural and local environment by 'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.'

Policy CP11 supports development in the countryside only where it maintains the high quality of the rural environment. Policy CP1(1) similarly 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 themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings CP3(f).

The Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document provides further guidance for developers with general guidance that development should respond positively to its site and local context (G1) and respond positively to the local character of the area (G2).

The barn materials would consist of rolled steel uprights and profiled sheet steel to roof and gable ends. Whilst utilitarian in appearance, this is characteristic of the simple agricultural and equestrian buildings commonly found within rural areas, where functionality rather than architectural detailing is the primary design consideration. The form, materials and appearance of the building are therefore consistent with the established rural character of the surrounding landscape and reflect the equestrian uses. Furthermore, given the barns location and significant distance from the public highway, it would not be visible from the public realm. Therefore, given the factors, the proposal would not have a negative impact upon the character of the area.

Neighbouring Amenity: It can be seen that whilst in proximity to the common boundary with Scarletts Barn and The Granary House, it at a significant distance from the dwellings and amenity space immediately outside of the dwellings. Furthermore, there is a mature tree screen and verdant cover which even at times of leaf fall would soften the impact of the proposed barn.

Trees and Landscape: The officer was unable to determine if the proposed barn could be wholly supported by the existing hardstanding, which appeared not to be wide enough meaning that the barn would require other means of support adjacent to the hardstanding in soft ground. My attention was also drawn to the presence of existing trees on the SE boundary with the adjacent dwellings and the potential conflict with tree roots dependant on the required extent of the type of support for the barn.

A more detailed drawing was submitted MLP/04 – Site Plan Hardstanding which showed the location of No Dig method supporting pads around a proposed portal frame structure – 10 No. in total. The drawing also showed the position of tree protection fencing.

The officer queried whether the soft landscape would be able to support the No Dig Pads. A subsequent letter Ref. SL/26/188 24.7.26 was submitted to the council which confirmed consultation with an engineer who specialises in investigation and testing confirmed that in the event of a drainage difficulty, helical screws could be used. However, given the lightweight nature of the barn the proposed No Dig method of the 10 pads is unlikely to require any specialist foundation.

Due to the scale and location of the construction pads it is unlikely they will encounter tree roots, and as a result of the protective close board fence of the adjacent land, there is no requirement for tree protective fencing. Any potential conflict with tree canopies can be resolved by pruning back of branches which do not require permission from the LPA.

As a result of the additional information provided, no landscape conditions are required

Highways Access/Parking: No parking issues as proposal relates to main dwelling and ancillary addition to Scarletts Lodge with no further transport issues.

Ecology Newts: If the development is to be permitted, then a compliance condition will be required in order to secure the reasonable avoidance measures (RAMs) as given in the submitted document: Reasonable Avoidance Measures For Great Crested Newts, Scarletts Lodge, Scarletts Lane, Hare Hatch, RG10 9XD, Dr Jonty Denton, 16th June 2026.

Ecology: The initial ecology comments required the applicant to confirm if there is to be any habitat loss and if there is provide a realistic BNG report completed by a suitable qualified ecologist. Following confirmation from the applicant that there has been no loss of habitat and there will be no loss of habitat as a result of the development proposal and the proposed development will be undertaken entirely on existing hardstanding. Consequently, less than 25 m² of habitat will be affected by the proposal. As the development impacts less than 25 m² of on-site habitat, it is exempt from the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements.

The previous ecology comments regarding protected species, specifically foraging, commuting and roosting bats remains unchanged:

The proposed location of the barn is in close proximity to a treeline which has the potential to support roosting bats according to our internal database.

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.

Given the location a sensitive lighting condition will be required. The height of the building, when combined with integrated lighting positioned at higher wall levels, has the potential to illuminate the adjacent eastern treeline. Artificial lighting has the impact to 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.

Other Matters:

Planning permission was originally granted (ref: 020513) for the equestrian use as an ancillary use to the occupation of the main dwellinghouse (Scarletts Lodge). The applicant's agent has confirmed that the proposed barn is intended solely to support that existing private equestrian use through the storage of hay, bedding, feed, machinery and associated land management equipment. The proposal is not intended to facilitate a commercial equestrian enterprise and the scale of the development is assessed on that basis.

To ensure that the development remains ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling in perpetuity, a planning condition will be imposed restricting the use of the barn and the wider equestrian facilities to purposes ancillary to the occupation of the dwellinghouse. Such a restriction is considered necessary given the countryside location of the site, where a commercial equestrian operation could give rise to materially different planning considerations, including increased activity, vehicle movements and associated impacts on the character of the area. This approach ensures that the development remains proportionate to, and justified by, the established ancillary equestrian use of the site.

The Parish Council agrees that the development should remain ancillary to the occupation of Scarletts Lodge and a condition will be imposed restricting the use of the barn accordingly. However, it is not considered necessary or reasonable to require the removal of the building and reinstatement of the land should the ancillary equestrian use cease. The development is not considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt and its acceptability is therefore not dependent upon a temporary or exceptional justification. The proposed removal condition would not meet the tests set out in paragraph 57 of the NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance. A condition restricting the use of the building to purposes ancillary to the occupation of Scarletts Lodge is considered sufficient to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

Conclusion: Given the reasons above explained in the report, the proposal is considered to be acceptable subject to conditions.

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:	Approve
Date:	30 July 2026
Earliest date for decision:	16 June 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	30.07.2026