

Item No.	Application No. and Parish	Statutory Target Date	Proposal, Location, Applicant
(1)	25/00912/FUL Bucklebury	4 th July 2025 *	Erection of two standalone supported living units, staff facility, elevational external and internal alterations to the existing activities building and conversion to a self catering unit associated with the existing care facility. Appletrees, Chapel Row, Reading, RG7 6PB Choice Holdings Limited
* Extension of time agreed with applicant until 17 th April 2026			

The application can be viewed on the Council's website at the following link:

<https://publicaccess.westberks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=SVCC3HRD04Z00>

Recommendation Summary: To delegate to the Development Manager to GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the conditions listed in this report

Ward Member: Councillor Read

Reason for Committee Determination: Member call in on grounds of impact on neighbours and drainage.

Committee Site Visit: 1st April 2026

Contact Officer Details

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is for the Committee to consider the proposed development against the policies of the development plan and the relevant material considerations, and to make a decision as to whether to approve or refuse the application.

This application seeks planning permission for the erection of two standalone supported living units and a new staff facility building. The proposals also seek external and internal alterations to the existing activities building to facilitate its conversion into a self catering unit associated with the existing care facility. The purpose of the application is to support Choice Care Group by providing accommodation for adults with learning disabilities, autism and mental health conditions. Choice Care have over 30 years experience of providing specialist care and operate over 80 residential homes and supported living services across England and Wales. The aim of this proposal is to provide residents with secure accommodation and to allow them time to develop independent daily living and personal skills and re-establish stability before moving on to more permanent general use housing.

Appletrees Care Home comprises a large detached property sat within approximately 0.31ha of land. The former farm house was converted into a care facility in the 1980s and is accessed from a shared unmade lane. Bridleway Bucklebury 72 runs over this access. The current property comprises of 8 bedrooms accommodating 8 residents with complex additional needs. The two proposed living units are to be sited within the garden of the property, at the northern end of the site near to the existing activities building which is also to be converted into an independent living unit. Each of the units contain a bedroom, shower room and kitchen/living room.

Permission is also sought for a cabin style structure to provide accommodation for staff and carers which contains 2 bedrooms, a shower room and a small area for making food. This is within close proximity to the self contained units. This is to provide 24 hour support to those living in the new units.

The proposal will allow for an additional three residents to live at the site.

Planning History

The table below outlines the relevant planning history of the application site.

Application	Proposal	Decision / Date
14/02592/FUL	Proposed extension and internal alterations to existing care home.	Withdrawn 25 th January 2015
99/54455/FULD	Demolition of existing activities building for adults with learning difficulties and construction of replacement activities building.	Approved 30 th July 1999

96/047801/FUL	Extension/alterations to provide additional residential accommodation – including bedrooms.	Approved 26 th July 1996
95/037017/ADD	Addition of dormer to provide 2 bedrooms and escape route with external stairs.	Approved 28 th September 1995
90/38544/ADD	Residential institutional use for the buildings known as St Annes & St Crispins redevelopment of existing outbuildings as educational	Refused 30.01.1991
90/38545/ADD	Residential institutional use for the buildings known as St Annes & St Crispins redevelopment of existing outbuildings as educational	Refused 30.01.1991 Appeal dismissed
90/36447/ADD	Temporary resiting from another site of a terrapin portable building for use as a classroom	09.04.1990 Appeal dismissed
83/020615/ADD	Alterations and additions to provide additional living accommodation for students.	Approved 17 th January 1984
83/19981/ADD	Alterations and additions to provide additional living accommodation for students.	Approved 21 st September 1983

Legal and Procedural Matters

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA):

In accordance with Regulation 8 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, the Local Council is required to adopt a screening opinion as to whether the proposal constitutes 'EIA development', and therefore whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required as part of the application. Having taking into account the selection criteria in Schedule 3, it is considered that the proposal is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment. Accordingly, the proposal is NOT considered "EIA development" within the meaning of the Regulations.

Publicity:

Publicity has been undertaken in accordance with Article 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

A site notice was displayed on 18th June 2025 on a telegraph pole next to the 'Appletrees' sign on the main road with a deadline for representations of 9th July 2025. An amended site notice was later displayed on the 15th July 2025 in the same location. This expired on the 5th August 2025.

The new site notice advertised a change to the description of development for clarification purposes only.

A public notice was displayed in the Newbury Weekly News on 5th June 2025; with a deadline for representations of 19th June 2025. Notification letters were sent to those properties within the vicinity of the site.

Local Financial Considerations:

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides that a local planning authority must have regard to a local finance consideration as far as it is material. Whether or not a 'local finance consideration' is material to a particular decision will depend on whether it could help to make the development acceptable in planning terms. It would not be appropriate to make a decision based on the potential for the development to raise money for a local authority or other government body. No local financial considerations are material to this application.

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED):

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The Council must have due regard to the need to achieve the following objectives:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—

- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The key protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage, the duty is to have regard to and remove or minimise disadvantage. The proposal relates to development within the curtilage of an established care facility which provides for adults with a learning disability. This has been given appropriate weight in your officers' recommendation. In considering the merits of this planning application, due regard has been given to these objectives.

Human Rights Act:

The development has been assessed against the provisions of the Human Rights Act, including Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of property), Article 6 (Right to a fair trial) and Article 8 (Right to respect for private and family life and home) of the Act itself. The consideration of the application in accordance with the Council procedures will ensure that views of all those interested are taken into account. All comments from interested parties have been considered and reported in summary in this report, with full text available via the Council's website.

Any interference with property rights is in the public interest and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 regime for controlling the development of land. This recommendation is based on the consideration of the proposal against adopted Development Plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the Human Rights of the applicant or any third party.

National Landscapes (AONB): Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 (as amended) provides a general duty for public bodies: "Any relevant authority exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to effect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty in England must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty)." AONBs have been rebranded to be known as National Landscapes, although their legal AONB status continues.

Consultation

Statutory and non-statutory consultation

The table below summarises the consultation responses received during the consideration of the application. The full responses may be viewed with the application documents on the Council's website, using the link at the start of this report.

Bucklebury Parish Council:	10 th June: No objection subject to conditions. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- That the business operating from Appletrees is responsible for maintaining the surface of the bridleway used to access the property.- Issues of surface water, which went into a culvert to the north side of the bridleway, which has been concreted over are addressed.- A management plan/policy is put into place such that employees are considerate of the neighbours, particularly when using the access route. 29 th July: No comments on amendments subject to above conditions being applied.
Highways:	No objection subject to conditions regarding electric vehicle charging.

Drainage:	Objection raised on insufficient drainage information.
Archaeology:	No objection: Limited or no archaeological implications.
Ecology:	No objections subject to conditions for a Construction Environmental Management Plan, Biodiversity Measures, Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan.
Nature Space:	No objection subject to a condition to ensure reasonable avoidance measures are incorporated into the works programme to avoid impacts on great crested newts.
Trees:	No objection subject to conditions relating to Tree Protection and Landscaping.
PROW:	No objection providing any surface damage to the bridleway caused during construction is repaired.
Environmental Health:	No objection.
Adult Social Care:	No objection.

Public representations

Representations have been received from 5 contributors, 0 of which support, and 5 of which object to the proposal. The full responses may be viewed with the application documents on the Council's website, using the link at the start of this report. In summary, the following issues/points have been raised:

- Concerns relating to an increase in the noise from residents – shouting and increase in vehicles.
- Increase in traffic on an unmade road which will cause damage to the surface.
- Concerns for the speed of traffic as road used by walkers, bikes and horse riders.
- Inappropriate development in a rural area.
- Impact on water supply as the properties are not currently on the water main.
- Not a suitable site for those with additional needs as no access to shops, parks etc.
- Road surface has been upgraded recently and causes some flooding on neighbouring land.

Planning Policy

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The following policies of the statutory development plan are relevant to the consideration of this application.

Development Plan Document	Relevant Policies
West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041	<p>Strategic Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy SP1 The Spatial Strategy • Policy SP2 North Wessex Downs AONB • Policy SP3 Settlement Hierarchy • Policy SP5 Responding to Climate Change • Policy SP6 Flood Risk • Policy SP7 Design Quality • Policy SP8 Landscape Character • Policy SP11 Biodiversity & Geodiversity <p>Development Management Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy DM1 Residential Development in the Countryside • Policy DM3 Health & Wellbeing • Policy DM4 Building Sustainable Homes & Businesses • Policy DM5 Environmental Nuisance & Pollution Control • Policy DM6 Water Quality • Policy DM7 Water Resources & Waste Water • Policy DM14 Assets of Archaeological Importance • Policy DM15 Trees, Woodland & Hedgerows • Policy DM19 Specialised Housing • Policy DM30 Residential Amenity • Policy DM38 Development on Existing Educational & Institutional Sites in the Countryside • Policy DM42 Transport Infrastructure • Policy DM44 Parking

The following material considerations are relevant to the consideration of this application:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- National Design Guide
- Quality Design SPD (2006)
- Planning Obligations SPD (2014)
- Sustainable Drainage Systems SPD (2018)
- North Wessex Downs National landscape (AONB) Management Plan 2025-2030

Appraisal

Principle of development

Policy SP1 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 identifies the North Wessex Downs National Landscape as one of three spatial areas within the district. It states that development will be required to follow the district wide settlement hierarchy set out in Policy SP3. The application site is situated within the open countryside. Both policies SP1 and SP3 state that outside of the defined settlements, in the open countryside, development will be restricted to that which is appropriate in a rural area as set out in DM1.

While Policy SP1 seeks to be more restrictive of new development in the open countryside, it offers support to existing small and medium sized enterprises within the countryside in order to provide local job opportunities and maintain the vitality of smaller rural settlements. Policy SP1 also states that within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape appropriate and sustainable growth will be supported that conserves and enhances its special landscape qualities.

Local Authorities must plan and support housing that meets the needs of different groups, which includes those with special needs among with older people and others requiring specialist accommodation. This is important to delivering a balanced and inclusive housing strategy.

Paragraph 61 of the NPPF states 'To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.' Paragraph 63 confirms that these 'groups' should include (but are not limited to) 'people with disabilities.'

Policy SP15, Housing Type and Mix recognises that new development must provide for those with specialist living requirements. Policy DM19 relates to Specialised Housing. This states that the provision of new specialist forms of housing designed to meet the needs of those with identified care needs will be supported where housing meets a proven locally identified need and the location is appropriate.

Appletrees comprises a long established rural business and care facility meeting the needs of those with learning disabilities, autism and mental health conditions. The aim of this application is to provide residents with security of accommodation to allow them time to develop independent daily living and personal skills and re-establish stability before moving on to more permanent general use housing. While some concerns have been raised by objectors that the site does not lend itself to easy access to services and facilities to help residents gain independence it is understood that a quiet and calm environment is important to residents.

National planning policy recognises that what is "sustainable" in transport and access terms can differ between urban and rural areas, and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances. For specialist supported living, the sustainability test is not only about walkable proximity to all services; it is also about whether provision enables people to live within (or close to) their home and existing community/family networks, rather than being placed away from them due to a lack of appropriate local supply. In this context, the proposal supports sustainability by meeting an identified local care accommodation gap and helping reduce out-of-area placements, which can disconnect residents from family and support networks.

The proposal is a small-scale addition (three self-contained units) on an established operational care site, making efficient use of existing developed land and established management arrangements and helps to respond to local needs.

West Berkshire Council's Adult Social Care Market Position Statement (MPS) 2025–2029, identifies supported living supply as an issue locally and notes that approximately two-thirds of additional needs supported living placements are currently outside West Berkshire. The MPS also indicates that the Council would welcome additional supported living settings for individuals with additional needs. This aligns directly with the facilities and services offered at Appletrees.

The proposal is for self contained living accommodation ancillary to the main use of the site, a care home in C2 use. Both the proposed layout of the site and the scale of the accommodation addresses any concerns that these could become new dwellings in the countryside as the layout of the site is not conducive to being split up and used independently. A condition has also been attached to ensure the units remain in use as part of the existing care facility.

Character and appearance

Policy SP7 states that new development will be required to strengthen a sense of place through high quality, locally distinctive design. Policy SP8 reinforces these principles seeking to conserve and enhance the local distinctiveness of the landscape character of the district.

Policy SP2 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 states that the North Wessex Downs National Landscape will have appropriate and sustainable growth that conserves and enhances its special landscape qualities. The strong sense of remoteness, tranquillity and dark night skies shall be preserved. The conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape will be the primary consideration in the assessment of all development proposals.

Appletrees lies to the north of Chapel Row and is accessed from an unmade road which serves a number of private dwellings. Appletrees is positioned half way along this access. Immediately to the south, east and west (beyond the road) are open fields. To the north lies St Crispins Farm. Further south are three detached properties (Glencoe, Bole Cottage and The Old bakehouse) which are clustered at the beginning of the road and traffic would need to pass these properties when visiting the application site.

Appletrees comprises a large, two storey detached property which has been subject to a number of extensions. Immediately to the north of the property is a large parking area. The main outdoor space lies to the back of the property. The plot is however long and narrow running parallel to the access road. Within this part of the site there is an existing brick building at the far end of the plot and the remainder of the area is laid to grass. There is a well established hedge and planting along the western boundary which screens the site from the access road while views of the open countryside to the east are more open.

The proposal seeks permission to construct 2 single storey lodge style structures on the land between the car park and the existing brick building at the northern end of the site. The buildings measure approximately 10m x 5m x 3.5m high. The buildings are to be clad with Scottish Larch which is a hard wearing timber and can be left untreated to naturally age. This will help the lodges blend in with the trees and green space which surrounds the site. The staff cabin measures 2.5m to the ridge and has a footprint of 6.75m x 4.7m and will be constructed or similar materials. By virtue of the existing residential nature and character of the site and the size of the proposed buildings, it is considered that the proposed development will not have a harmful impact on the

open character of the area. Furthermore the use of sympathetic, natural materials will help the structures to blend in.

Low level bollard lighting is proposed alongside the permeable pathways to ensure safety of residents and staff. City Oath LED bollards are proposed as they will provide low level lighting that avoids any light spill, beneficial to both the ecology and dark night skies. These use of this lighting will be secured by condition to limit light spill and any adverse impacts.

In conclusion it is considered that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on the character of the area or the National Landscape and as such accords with Policy SP7 and SP8 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 and the AONB Management Plan and the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Planning considerations

Impact on neighbour amenity:

In accordance with Policy DM30 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041, all development will be required to provide and/or maintain a high standard of amenity for existing and future users of land and buildings. Furthermore Policy DM19 continues to state that planning permission for extensions or alterations to existing specialised housing will be supported where:

- c) activities and/or operations associated with the development do not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbours through increased noise and disturbance

Concern has been raised by a number of objectors with regards to noise from residents and the impact of this on the amenity of local properties. To the north is St Crispins Farm with the nearest buildings in agricultural use. The nearest residential property outside of the site to the south is over 180m away. The residential use of the site is compatible with the surrounding uses and as such is not considered to have an adverse impact on neighbour amenity however any operational matters would need to be dealt with directly with the site manager.

Concern has been raised by residents for the use of the access road and impact on the surfacing of the public right of way. The Public Rights of Way Team have been consulted and have raised no objections subject to any damage to the surface being repaired.

In conclusion, the proposal is not considered to have an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and as such the proposal accords with Policy DM30 and criterion c) of Policy DM19 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 and the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Impact on Highways:

Policy SP19 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 requires new development that generates a transport impact to mitigate any adverse impacts on the local transport network. The application is supported by a Highways Technical Note. The proposal seeks to utilise the existing access into the site which is narrow in places however the proposal would result in a relatively low increase in the number of movements. TRICS has been interrogated to establish the likely number of vehicle movements associated with the proposals. The table at paragraph 3.1.13 of the Transport Note cites some 7 daily movements. Deliveries and servicing would be incorporated into trips for the existing care home. The applicant has confirmed that given the nature of the facility the three new occupiers are very unlikely to be car owners.

Sufficient car parking can be provided within the application site. A condition has been requested to secure the provision of 1 electric car charging space.

The visibility splays are provided in accordance with current guidance.

No objections have been raised by the Highways Officer subject to a condition and as such the proposal accords with Policy SP19 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 and the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Impact on Public Rights of Way:

Bridleway 73/2 Bucklebury, forms the access into the site. The bridleway is a public highway for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians which have a priority right of way. Vehicular use of the bridleway is by virtue of possession of private rights. Wear and tear on the surface of the bridleway caused by the passage of private vehicles must be remediated by those exercising the private rights. No objections are raised by the Public Rights of Way Officer providing any surface damage caused by the passage of construction vehicles is repaired and informatives have been attached to the recommendation as requested by the consultee.

Impact on Trees:

Policy DM15 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 seeks to conserve and enhance trees and hedgerows. The application is accompanied by a Tree Protection Plan to BS 5837:2012 which shows the development may take place without significant harm to the existing trees. Generally, tree stock within the site is sparse and filtered views of the site can be obtained from the Public Bridleway. Augmentation of the hedgerow to the north with increased planting of native species (including crab Apple) would provide suitable mitigation on negative impacts on the bridleway. Subject to a condition to ensure the tree protection measures are complied with and to secure the submission of a soft landscaping scheme, possibly to incorporate one to two feature trees, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and complies with Policy DM15 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 and the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Impact on Ecology:

Policy SP11 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 requires new development to conserve and enhance biodiversity and/or geodiversity including their long-term future management and where required deliver Biodiversity Net Gains. The application is supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.

The report concludes that the site is unlikely to support any protected or notable species. Biodiversity enhancements are proposed to include the fitting of a bird box to the exterior of each of the lodges and the addition of a log pile/bug hotel within the garden setting.

Nature Space have commented on the application and no objection has been raised subject to a condition to ensure reasonable avoidance measures are incorporated into the works programme to avoid impacts on great crested newts.

No objections have been raised by the Ecologist subject to conditions relating to a Construction Environmental Management Plan, secure biodiversity measures within the Ecological Impact Assessment and a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan and Biodiversity Gain Plan. As such the proposal accords with Policy SP11 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 and the guidance within the Framework.

Impact on Drainage:

Policy SP6 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 seeks to locate new development in the areas of lowest flood risk. A Flood Risk Assessment should accompany all applications where the development could be subject to other sources of flooding. The application site is within Flood Zone 1. The proposed use is classified as 'more vulnerable' and is considered appropriate within Flood Zone 1. The exception test is not required.

The majority of the site is not at risk of surface water flooding. There is a small flow path at a low risk to the east of one of the proposed lodges, near the site boundary and adjacent field. The lodges are to be sited outside of any area identified as being vulnerable to ground water flooding. While a small section of the access path to the southern lodge is at a low risk of surface water flooding dry access is still available via the path and this would not be impeded access and egress if flooding were to occur.

There is an area of high risk surface water flooding adjacent to the main access road/bridleway which forms the access into the site from the main road, this is more than some 80m from the site entrance, however the FRA demonstrates that safe access and egress can still be achieved. The FRA concludes that the risk from flooding from groundwater and artificial sources is low and the development proposals do not have the potential to affect the risk of flooding elsewhere. The Drainage Officer has confirmed that the Flood Risk Assessment is appropriate.

The Drainage Officer has however expressed concern for the suitability of the surface water drainage strategy. The Drainage Officer has requested that further information is provided at this stage to ensure a suitable strategy can be achieved. It is however the planning officer's opinion that when taking into consideration the extent of the areas of surface water flooding, the severity of the risk and the size of the site to be retained as garden, that there is sufficient space within the site to secure effective drainage measures. As such a drainage condition has been recommended on this basis.

It is understood from the Parish comments that a culvert on the access road has been covered over resulting in some surface water flooding. This is an existing situation and the application cannot be used to resolve existing problems.

In conclusion and subject to conditions it is considered that the proposal complies with Policy SP6 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 and the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Energy efficiency:

Policy SP5 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 states that the principles of climate change mitigation and adaptation will be required to be embedded into new development. All development to contribute to West Berkshire becoming and staying carbon neutral by 2030.

Policy DM4 requires new development to achieve net zero operational carbon emissions (regulated and unregulated energy) by implementing the energy hierarchy. As set out in the first part of the policy proposals should demonstrate application of the energy hierarchy. Section 2 relates to non-residential development with reference to residential institutions (use C2). The units are below 100sqm in size and as such the proposal is below the size criteria of the policy thus it would therefore be extremely difficult to meet these policy standards on buildings of such a small scale. Section 3 similarly excludes developments of less than 100sqm.

The applicant has however completed the Council's template Sustainability Statement which is supplemented by additional information within the Design and Access Statement. The proposed lodges are designed using passive principles with high U-Values, air tightness and low thermal bridging. This means there will be a high level of comfort and low demand for energy and low running costs. Materials are natural where possible with a timber structure insulated from natural materials such as cellulose and wood fibre. Windows have either secondary or high performance glazing. The applicant has confirmed that they will use air source heat pumps for heating and a condition has been attached on this basis.

In conclusion the proposals are considered to meet with the aims of policies SP5 and DM4 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041.

Town/Parish Council representations

Bucklebury Parish Council have raised no objection to this application subject to a number of conditions, these relate to three matters:

- That the business operating from Appletrees is responsible, in perpetuity, for maintaining the surface of the bridleway used to access the property. A bridleway is a highway and its maintenance is usually a statutory responsibility of the Local Highway Authority. The Public Rights of Way team have commented on this application and raised no objections subject to informatives to ensure that there is no damage caused to the surface of the bridleway. These informatives are attached to this recommendation. For these reasons it would not be reasonable or necessary to attach a condition requiring the applicant to maintain the surface of the bridleway.
- That issues associated with surface water, which previously went into a culvert on the north side of the bridleway, but has now been concreted over, are addressed. This is an existing matter which cannot be resolved through this application. A drainage condition has been recommended to ensure that the site, once the new buildings are constructed, is suitably drained.
- A management plan/policy is put in place such that employees of the business are considerate of the neighbours, particularly when using the access route. While it is appreciated why the Council seek such reassurance this is an operational matter not a planning one and as such it would not be reasonable to attach a condition on this basis.

Conclusion

The application seeks permission for three small self-contained supported living units and staff accommodation ancillary to an established C2 care facility. The site is located within the open countryside in the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. While development in the countryside is generally restricted under Policies SP1 and SP3, support is given to the expansion of existing rural enterprises and the provision of specialist accommodation where a local need is identified. Planning Policy also recognises the need for specialist housing within the district.

The proposal responds to a shortfall in supported living provision within West Berkshire and would help reduce out of area placements. The development is modest in scale, contained within the existing site, and designed using appropriate materials to ensure it sits comfortably within the surrounding landscape. Subject to conditions it is considered that the proposal would preserve

the character of the National Landscape, safeguard neighbouring amenity, and avoid unacceptable impacts in terms of highways, ecology, trees, and drainage.

Full Recommendation

To delegate to the Development Manager to GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the conditions listed below.

Conditions

1	<p>Commencement of development</p> <p>The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.</p> <p>Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).</p>
2	<p>Approved plans</p> <p>The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents listed below:</p> <p>Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.</p>
3	<p>Schedule of materials</p> <p>No development shall commence until a schedule of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Samples of materials shall be made available upon request. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that the external materials respect the character and appearance of the area. This condition is applied in accordance with Policies SP7 and SP8 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 and Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006) the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework. A pre-commencement condition is required because the approved materials will be used throughout construction.</p>
4	<p>Hard landscaping</p> <p>The supported living units and staff facility hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until the hard landscaping of the site has been completed in accordance with a hard landscaping scheme that has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The hard landscaping scheme shall include details of any boundary treatments (e.g. walls, fences) and hard surfaced areas (e.g. driveways, paths, patios, decking) to be provided as part of the development.</p> <p>Reason: Landscaping is an integral element of achieving high quality design. It is understood that new boundaries may need to be constructed to meet the operational needs of the site. The design of these should be in keeping and sensitive to the location of the site within the open countryside. This condition is applied in accordance</p>

	with Policies SP7 and SP8 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 and Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006) and the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework.
5	<p>Ground levels and finished floor levels</p> <p>No development shall take place until details of existing and proposed ground levels, and finished floor levels of the supporting living units and staff facility, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure a satisfactory relationship between the proposed development and the adjacent land. These details are required before development commenced because insufficient information accompanies the application, and the agreed details will affect early construction activities. This condition is applied in accordance with Policies SP7 and SP8 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 and Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006) the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework.</p>
6	<p>Use restriction</p> <p>The three supported living units shall be occupied by those receiving care on site and shall remain ancillary to the care facility use of the site and used for no other purpose.</p> <p>Reason: The site is located within the open countryside where there is a presumption against new residential development. The proposal is justified on the basis that it supports an existing business and must therefore remain an ancillary use in accordance with Policy SP1 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 and the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework.</p>
7	<p>Electric vehicle charging point</p> <p>The supported living units and staff facility hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until an electric vehicle charging point has been provided in accordance with details that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the charging point shall be maintained, and kept available and operational for electric vehicles at all times.</p> <p>Reason: To secure the provision of charging points to encourage the use of electric vehicles. This condition is applied in accordance with Policy DM44 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 and the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework.</p>
8	<p>Construction Environmental Management Plan</p> <p>No development shall take place (including demolition, ground works, vegetation clearance) until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities. b) Identification of “biodiversity protection zones”.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements). d) The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features. e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works. f) Responsible persons and lines of communication. g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person. h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs. <p>The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.</p> <p>Reason: To avoid harm to protected species during demolition/construction and preparatory operations. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy SP11 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041. A pre-commencement condition is required because the CEMP will need to be adhered to throughout construction.</p>
9	<p>Biodiversity measures</p> <p>The supported living units hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until the following biodiversity measures have been installed/constructed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Log-pile/hibernacula and bug hotel have been installed within the vegetated garden setting; b) Two bird nesting opportunities and two bee bricks in accordance with details that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. <p>Reason: To ensure biodiversity enhancements are incorporated into the development. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policy SP11 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041.</p>
10	<p>Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan in accordance with Biodiversity Gain Plan</p> <p>The development shall not commence until a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (the HMMP), prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The HMMP shall be prepared to accompany the Biodiversity Gain Plan, and shall be submitted for approval alongside or after the submission the BGP.</p>

(NOTE: In accordance with Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, this planning permission is subject to the condition (“the biodiversity gain condition”) that the development may not be begun unless (a) a biodiversity gain plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and (b) the planning authority has approved the plan. This is deemed to be applied by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and is not replicated on this decision notice. Full details are set out in the informative below.)

The HMMP shall include:

- (1) a non-technical summary;
- (2) the roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the HMMP;
- (3) the planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan;
- (4) the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of development; and
- (5) the monitoring methodology and frequency in respect of the created or enhanced habitat to be submitted to the local planning authority,

The details provided in relation to point (5) shall ensure that, as a minimum, monitoring takes place in 2 years, 5 years, 10 years, 15 years, 20 years, 25 years, 30 years following completion of the development. For the purposes of this condition, completion of development shall be taken as the ‘completion of two standalone supported living units and staff facility’.

No occupation shall take place until:

- (6) the habitat creation and enhancement works set out in the approved HMMP have been completed; and
- (7) a completion report, evidencing the completed habitat enhancements, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Notice in writing shall be given to the Council when the:

- (8) HMMP has been implemented; and
- (9) habitat creation and enhancement works as set out in the HMMP have been completed.

The created and/or enhanced habitat specified in the approved HMMP shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved HMMP.

	<p>Monitoring reports shall be submitted to local planning authority in writing in accordance with the methodology and frequency specified in the approved HMMP.</p> <p>Where monitoring identifies the required habitat condition is not being maintained in accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Plan, the submission to the Local Planning Authority shall include any necessary remedial measures, and thereafter any such measures shall be carried out within a timescale agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Supplemental reports may be required pursuant to this condition where necessary.</p> <p>Where monitoring identifies the required habitat condition is not being maintained in accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Plan, the submission to the Local Planning Authority shall include any necessary remedial measures, and thereafter any such measures shall be carried out within a timescale agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Supplemental reports may be required pursuant to this condition where necessary.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure the development delivers a biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. A pre-commencement condition is required because the habitat and management arrangements need to be determined before existing habitats are affected.</p>
11	<p>Reasonable Avoidance Measures – Great Crested Newts</p> <p>No development shall commence until a Reasonable Avoidance Measures Strategy is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall demonstrate what measures will be implemented to avoid impacts on Great Crested Newts during site clearance and construction. The approved document shall thereafter be implemented in full.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure the protection of Great Crested newts. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policy SP11 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041.</p>
12	<p>Tree Protection (scheme submitted)</p> <p>All Tree Protective Fencing shall be erected in accordance with the submitted Keen Consultants Tree Protection Plan, reference drawing numbers 2436 KC AP YTREE TPP01 Rev01 dated March 2025. The protective fencing shall be implemented and retained intact for the duration of the development. Within the fenced areas, there shall be no excavations, storage or mixing of materials, storage of machinery, parking of vehicles or fires.</p> <p>Reason: Required to safeguard and to enhance the setting within the immediate locality to ensure the protection and retention of existing trees and natural features during the construction phase in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041.</p>
13	<p>Landscaping</p> <p>No development or other operations shall commence on site until a detailed scheme of landscaping for the site is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities • an implementation programme providing sufficient specifications to ensure successful cultivation of trees, shrub and grass establishment. <p>The scheme shall ensure;</p> <p>a) Completion of the approved landscape scheme within the first planting season following completion of development.</p> <p>b) Any trees shrubs or plants that die or become seriously damaged within five years of this development shall be replaced in the following year by plants of the same size and species.</p> <p>A pre-commencement condition is necessary because insufficient detailed information accompanies the application; landscaping measures may require work to be undertaken throughout the construction phase and so it is necessary to approve these details before any development takes place.</p> <p>Reason: Required to safeguard and enhance the character and amenity of the area, to provide ecological, environmental and bio-diversity benefits and to maximise the quality and usability of open spaces within the development, and to enhance its setting within the immediate locality. This is to ensure the implementation of a satisfactory scheme of landscaping in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041.</p>
14	<p>Drainage:</p> <p>No development shall take place until details of sustainable drainage measures to manage surface water within the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.</p> <p>These details shall:</p> <p>a) Incorporate the implementation of Sustainable Drainage methods (SuDS) in accordance with the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for SuDS (March 2015), the SuDS Manual C753 (2015) and the WBC SuDS Supplementary Planning Document December 2018 with particular emphasis on Green SuDS and water re-use and design principles set out in 114189.626241 Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, November 2024, Delta Simons.</p> <p>b) Include full information of catchments and flows discharging into and across the site and how these flows will be managed and routed through the development and, where the flows exit the site, both pre-development and post-development information must be provided.</p> <p>c) Include run-off calculations based on current rainfall data models for the proposed drainage strategy and SuDS measures, allowing for hydraulic connectivity based on a 1 in 100 year storm +25% for climate change with a maximum discharge rate of 4.5l/s.</p> <p>d) Include construction drawings, cross-sections and specifications of all proposed SuDS measures within the site.</p> <p>e) Include details of any pre-treatment methods to prevent any pollution or silt entering SuDS features or causing any contamination to the watercourse.</p> <p>f) Show that attenuation storage measures have a 300mm freeboard above maximum design water level. Surface conveyance features must have a 150mm freeboard above maximum design water level.</p>

	<p>g) Include a standalone management and maintenance plan showing how the SuDS measures will be maintained and managed after completion for the lifetime of the development. This plan shall incorporate arrangements for adoption by the Council, Water and Sewage Undertaker, Maintenance or Management Company (private company or Trust) or individual property owners, or any other arrangements, including maintenance responsibilities resting with individual property owners, to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage scheme throughout its lifetime. These details shall be provided as part of a handover pack for subsequent purchasers and owners of the property/premises.</p> <p>h) Include an Application for an Ordinary Watercourse Consent in case of surface water discharge into a watercourse (i.e stream, ditch etc).</p> <p>The above sustainable drainage measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the use hereby permitted is commenced in accordance with a timetable to be submitted and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority as part of the details submitted for this condition. The sustainable drainage measures shall be maintained and managed in accordance with the approved details thereafter.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that surface water will be managed in a sustainable manner; to prevent the increased risk of flooding; to improve and protect water quality, habitat and amenity and ensure future maintenance of the surface water drainage system can be, and is carried out in an appropriate and efficient manner. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies SP6 and ESA4 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041, Part 4 of Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006) and SuDS Supplementary Planning Document (Dec 2018). A pre-condition is necessary because insufficient detailed information accompanies the application; sustainable drainage measures may require work to be undertaken throughout the construction phase and so it is necessary to approve these details before any development takes place.</p>
15	<p>Air Source Heat Pumps:</p> <p>The units hereby approved shall not be occupied until details of the proposed air source heat pumps have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall show the location of the pumps, a specification for the pumps used and noise levels. The details shall thereafter be implemented in full.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure the principles of climate change mitigation and adaptation are embedded into the development in accordance with Policy SP5 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 and the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework.</p>

Informatives

1	This decision has been made in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development having regard to Development Plan policies and available guidance to
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	secure high quality appropriate development. The local planning authority has worked proactively with the applicant to secure a development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.
2	<p>BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN</p> <p>The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition)" that development may not begin unless:</p> <p>(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and</p> <p>(b) the planning authority has approved the plan.</p> <p>The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be West Berkshire District Council.</p> <p>Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements are considered to apply.</p> <p>In summary: Biodiversity gain plans are required to be submitted to, and approved by, the planning authority before development may be begun (the overall plan), and before each phase of development may be begun (phase plans).</p>
3	The attention of the applicant is drawn to the Berkshire Act, 1986, Part II, Clause 9, which enables the Highway Authority to recover the costs of repairing damage to the footway, cycleway or grass verge, arising during building operations.
4	The attention of the applicant is drawn to the Highways Act 1980, which enables the Highway Authority to recover expenses due to extraordinary traffic.
5	The applicant is advised that all visitors to the site should be made aware that they would be driving along a public bridleway. As a result they should drive with caution when manoeuvring into and out of the site, and should give way to pedestrians/ cyclists/ equestrians at all times.
6	Nothing connected with either the development or the construction must adversely affect or encroach upon the bridleway, which must remain available for public use at all times.
7	The applicant is advised that the Rights of Way Officer must be informed prior to the laying of any services beneath the path.
8	No alteration of the surface of the right of way must take place without the prior written consent of the Rights of Way Officer.