

SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

Retrospective application for an increase in the number of children attending an existing nursery (Use Class E(f)) at

Goldilocks, 77 School Road, Tilehurst, Reading RG31 5AT

1. Introduction

This sustainability statement supports a retrospective planning application for the continued use of the premises as a nursery (Goldilocks) with an increased number of children on site. The use remains within Class E(f), and there is no change of use or operational development proposed. The site comprises an existing building within the established urban area of Tilehurst.

The statement addresses the key principles of sustainable development as set out in the Reading Borough Local Plan (adopted November 2019), with particular reference to policies:

- CC1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- CC2: Sustainable design and construction
- CC3: Adaptation to climate change
- CC4: Decentralised energy
- CC5: Waste minimisation and water efficiency

The location plan is shown in the plan in Figure 1 below, with a google map street view shown in Figure 2.

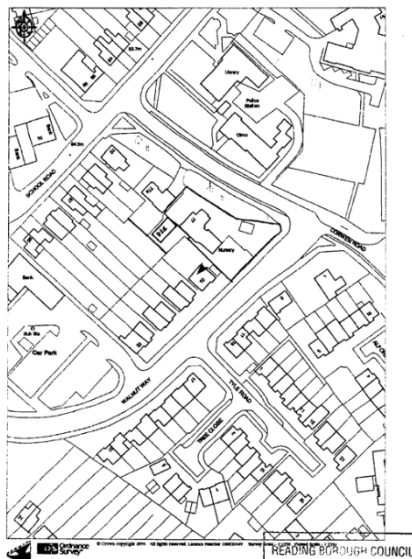


Figure 1



Figure 2

2. Proposed Approach to Sustainability

This statement sets out the approach that the applicant is proposing to adopt to ensure that the proposal meets high standards of sustainability. The report includes a discussion of the full range of sustainability issues as shown below:

- Energy & carbon emissions
- Water conservation
- Flood risk, surface & waste water management
- Waste & pollution
- Materials selection and sustainable construction method

This will demonstrate that this proposed development will meet the requirements of policies CC1.CC2.CC3.CC4.CC5, of the **Reading Core Strategy**.

2.1 Reading Borough Council's (RBC) Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2011) also requires proposals such as this to demonstrate compliance with the 'very good' standard of the **BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment Scheme**.

Although no construction or refurbishment works are proposed as part of this application, the continued use of the site aligns with the principles of sustainability set out in Reading Borough Council's **Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2011)** and Local Plan Policies **CC1 to CC5**. The building is already in active, efficient use and incorporates the following sustainable features:

- **Energy Efficiency:** The building is fitted with **double glazing** and is heated via a **gas central heating system**, ensuring reasonable energy performance for its existing use.
- **Water Conservation:** Water use on site is limited to operational needs typical for a day nursery, and the building includes **low-flow fixtures** to manage consumption responsibly.
- **Waste Management:** Operational waste is minimised and separated for recycling in accordance with commercial waste collection arrangements, consistent with the Council's waste hierarchy.
- **Sustainable Location:** The site is in a well-connected, accessible area, encouraging staff and families to walk, cycle, or use public transport, thereby reducing car dependency.

This approach ensures that the nursery continues to operate in an environmentally responsible manner, making efficient use of existing resources and supporting local sustainability objectives without the need for new development.

3. Energy & Carbon Emissions (Policy CC1 & CC2)

Although no new construction or refurbishment is proposed, the continued operation of the nursery incorporates measures that support energy efficiency and contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions, consistent with the aims of Policies **CC1 (Sustainable Development)** and **CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction)**.

Key features include:

- **Gas Central Heating:** The building is heated via an existing, well-maintained **gas central heating system**, which is regularly serviced to ensure efficient performance and to minimise unnecessary energy use.
- **Double Glazing:** All windows are fitted with **double-glazed units**, which help reduce heat loss and improve the building's thermal efficiency.
- **Efficient Use of Existing Building Stock:** By making continued use of an existing building without the need for new materials or construction, the proposal avoids the embodied carbon associated with new development, contributing to overall carbon savings.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Staff are encouraged to adopt low-energy practices (e.g. switching off lights and equipment when not in use), and the site is used efficiently throughout the day to maximise the value of its existing energy demand.

These operational measures support Reading Borough Council's goal of reducing energy consumption across all development types — including changes of use and intensification of existing uses — in a manner proportionate to the scale of the proposal.

Benchmarks:

- **Energy Use Intensity (EUI):**

Ground floor Class E commercial space — likely to be used for a **restaurant/café** or similar.

8 residential flats on the upper floors.

Energy Benchmarks

The existing nursery at 77 School Road, Tilehurst, has been reviewed against standard energy benchmarks, including those set out in **CIBSE TM46: Energy Benchmarks**, to demonstrate ongoing operational efficiency in line with **Policies CC1 and CC2** of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

- The property functions as a **Class E(f) day nursery**, with energy use characteristics similar to small-scale education or community-use buildings. Based on CIBSE guidance, the typical **Energy Use Intensity (EUI)** for this type of use is approximately **150–200 kWh/m²/year**, depending on hours of operation, heating type, and ventilation.
- The nursery currently operates with **gas central heating, double glazing**, and domestic-scale lighting and appliances. These contribute to reasonable energy performance within the expected benchmark range.

Although no physical works are proposed as part of this application, the continued efficient use of the existing building supports Reading Borough Council's objectives to reduce energy demand and carbon emissions from all development, including intensification of existing uses.

Proposed Measures:

- **Enhanced Insulation:** Implement high-performance insulation to reduce heating and cooling demands.
- **Efficient HVAC Systems:** Install energy-efficient heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems to optimize energy use.
- **LED Lighting:** Utilize LED lighting with occupancy sensors to minimize unnecessary energy consumption.
- **Renewable Energy Integration:** Assess the feasibility of installing solar photovoltaic panels to offset a portion of the energy demand.

Targets

Although the application relates only to the continued use of an existing day nursery with an increased number of children—and does not involve new construction or refurbishment—the nursery aims to operate in a way that supports energy efficiency and carbon reduction targets in line with Reading Borough Council Local Plan Policies CC1 and CC2, and national commitments under the Climate Change Act 2008.

- **Nursery Operations (Class E(f) Use)**

Based on typical benchmarks for small-scale day nurseries, the building targets an **Energy Use Intensity (EUI)** in the region of **150–200 kWh/m²/year**, reflective of the use of gas central heating, double glazing, and domestic-scale electrical systems.

The nursery continues to identify low-impact improvements such as LED lighting and responsible energy use policies to reduce operational demand wherever feasible.

- **Carbon Emissions**

While the nursery is not undergoing refurbishment, its continued use of an existing building without the need for new materials or construction significantly reduces embodied carbon emissions. Ongoing use of gas heating and domestic systems is managed efficiently to reduce day-to-day carbon output.

Opportunities for further reduction—such as boiler upgrades or small-scale renewables—will be considered as part of future operational planning.

- **Alignment with Policy**

The nursery's operations aim to meet the spirit of Reading Borough Council's sustainability policies by minimising energy use, avoiding unnecessary development, and making efficient use of existing infrastructure. This approach contributes to local and national carbon reduction targets in a proportionate and practical way.

4. Water Resource Management

Although no physical development or refurbishment is proposed, the nursery continues to operate in a way that supports responsible water use, consistent with the objectives of Policy CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change) and Policy CC5 (Waste Minimisation and Water Efficiency) of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Existing and Proposed Measures:

- **Efficient Fixtures & Fittings**

The nursery is fitted with low-flow taps and dual-flush toilets, helping to minimise potable water use. Where fixtures are replaced through routine maintenance, water-efficient replacements are prioritised.

- **Operational Good Practice**

Staff are encouraged to reduce unnecessary water use, particularly in routine cleaning and hygiene practices. Children are taught basic water-saving habits as part of environmental education activities.

- **Surface Water Management**

The site relies on existing drainage infrastructure, and no new impermeable surfaces are introduced as part of this proposal. There is no increased flood risk, and surface water continues to be discharged appropriately.

- **Rainwater and Green Features**

While no changes are proposed, the feasibility of small-scale rainwater-saving measures, such as water butts or planter-based landscaping, may be explored as part of the nursery's long-term environmental commitments.

Water Use Benchmarks and Targets:

- **Water Consumption**

For small-scale educational and childcare settings such as this, best practice targets aim for water consumption below 4.0 m³ per child per year, or an equivalent of approximately 0.4–0.5 m³/m²/year depending on building size and occupancy. The nursery's current use is expected to fall within or below these benchmarks, reflecting limited water-intensive activities.

- **Future Monitoring**

While formal metering is not required for this application, any future upgrades or changes to water systems will incorporate monitoring and leak detection where feasible.

This approach demonstrates proportionate and practical water efficiency in an existing facility, supporting Reading Borough Council's commitment to climate resilience and

sustainable resource management.

4. Flood Risk, Surface & Wastewater Management

Flood Risk

According to the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning, the site at 77 School Road, Tilehurst is located entirely within Flood Zone 1, meaning it is at low risk of flooding from rivers or seas. There is no known history of surface water flooding affecting the site, and no flood mitigation measures are required.

Surface Water Drainage

The proposal involves no operational development and retains the existing building and site layout. As such:

- No additional impermeable surfaces are introduced.
- Surface water drainage continues via the existing infrastructure, which is functioning adequately and has capacity for the site's current use.
- There is no change in runoff rates, and the proposed increase in child numbers will not increase pressure on the drainage system.

Wastewater Management

- The nursery is connected to the existing foul drainage network, which is adequate for the level of activity on site.
- There is no proposed increase in water use or wastewater discharge beyond what is typical for a small day nursery and well within the capacity of the existing system.

Policy Alignment (Policy CC3 & CC5)

While no changes to drainage or surface water systems are required, the ongoing use of the site aligns with Reading Borough Council's expectations under Policies CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change) and CC5 (Waste Minimisation and Water Efficiency) by:

- Maintaining existing sustainable drainage conditions.
- Avoiding any increase in flood risk on or off-site.
- Supporting the responsible management of wastewater and surface water without the need for new infrastructure.

4. Waste & Pollution

Waste Management

As no construction, refurbishment, or demolition works are proposed as part of this application, a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) is not required. However, the nursery operates in a manner that supports responsible waste management, in line with the principles set out in Policy CC5 (Waste Minimisation and Water Efficiency) of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Operational waste management practices include:

- **Separation of Waste Streams:** General and recyclable waste are separated on-site and collected by a licensed commercial waste provider.
- **Recycling Commitment:** The nursery promotes recycling of paper, packaging, and food waste, and seeks to reduce single-use items wherever practical.
- **Waste Education:** Children are introduced to the concepts of recycling and environmental responsibility through age-appropriate activities, helping reinforce sustainable behaviour within the wider community.

Pollution Control

- The nursery does not generate industrial or hazardous waste.

- **Cleaning products and maintenance materials** are selected with environmental safety in mind.
- **Noise levels** are minimal and consistent with the site's historic use as a day nursery.

Targets & Ongoing Practice

- **Waste Diversion:** The nursery aims to divert the majority of recyclable waste from landfill through regular, monitored collection practices.
- **Efficient Procurement:** Supplies are ordered in bulk where possible to reduce packaging waste, and products with recyclable or reusable packaging are prioritised.

By operating efficiently and minimising its environmental impact, the nursery continues to support local sustainability goals even in the absence of physical development.

Pollution Control

As no construction or groundworks are proposed as part of this retrospective application, there will be **no dust, noise, or construction-related pollution** generated. However, the nursery operates in a way that continues to **minimise environmental impact**, in accordance with **Policy CC4 (Sustainable Design and Construction)** and **Policy CC5 (Waste Minimisation and Water Efficiency)** of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Ongoing pollution control measures include:

- **Noise Management:** The nursery operates within normal daytime hours and is located in a mixed residential setting. Activities are managed to minimise outdoor noise, and no amplified equipment is used externally.
- **Air Quality:** The site generates minimal vehicular traffic, with many families arriving on foot or by public transport. There is no on-site combustion activity beyond the existing domestic-scale gas heating system.
- **Cleaning and Maintenance:** Environmentally friendly cleaning products and materials are used wherever possible to limit harmful chemical discharge and protect indoor air quality.
- **External Environment:** The site is well-maintained to prevent litter, and bins are managed to avoid odours and vermin. There is no outdoor storage of potentially polluting substances.

Policy Compliance

These ongoing operational practices are consistent with the objectives of **Policies CC4 and CC5**, ensuring that the nursery:

- Minimises emissions and disturbance,
- Operates responsibly in a sensitive urban setting, and
- Supports Reading Borough Council's wider environmental and public health goals.

4. Materials Selection & Sustainable Construction Methods

As no new construction, refurbishment, or material changes are proposed in this application, there is **no immediate material selection or construction activity** associated with the site. However, the nursery continues to operate in a manner that reflects the principles of **sustainable resource use** and responsible maintenance, in line with **Policies CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction)** and **CC5 (Waste Minimisation and Water Efficiency)** of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Ongoing Sustainable Practices:

- **Responsible Maintenance**
Any repairs or replacements are carried out using **durable, low-impact materials**. Where

feasible, the nursery prioritises products that are:

- **Responsibly sourced** (e.g. FSC-certified timber),
- **Low in embodied carbon**, and
- **Low in harmful chemicals**, such as **low-VOC paints and finishes** to maintain healthy indoor air quality.
- **Reuse and Longevity**
The nursery minimises waste by **repairing and reusing** furniture, equipment, and materials whenever practical. Items such as toys, shelving, and storage are selected for their durability and long-term performance.
- **Sustainable Procurement**
Everyday supplies are sourced with consideration for packaging, material content, and lifecycle impacts. The nursery favours suppliers that use **recycled or recyclable materials** and reduce unnecessary packaging.

Long-Term Targets (Operational Focus):

- While no embodied carbon targets apply to this application, the nursery informally seeks to **extend the life of existing materials**, reduce reliance on single-use items, and **support circular economy principles** through reuse and responsible procurement.

These measures help minimise the nursery's environmental footprint in the absence of development, supporting local sustainability goals through everyday operational choices.

5. Conclusion

This sustainability statement has demonstrated that the retrospective proposal for increased child numbers at **Goldilocks Nursery, 77 School Road, Tilehurst, RG31 5AT** is consistent with the principles of sustainable development as set out in the **Reading Borough Local Plan** and the Council's **Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2011)**.

While the proposal does not involve any new construction, operational practices at the nursery already support key sustainability objectives, including:

- **Policy CC1 (Sustainable Development):** Making efficient use of an existing building in a sustainable urban location, enhancing local childcare provision without requiring additional land take or construction.
- **Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction):** Operating the building efficiently through features such as double glazing, gas central heating, and responsible energy and water use.
- **Policy CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change):** Maintaining a low-risk site in terms of flooding, with no increase in surface water runoff or infrastructure demands.
- **Policy CC4 (Decentralised Energy and Sustainable Construction):** Minimising emissions through efficient energy use and exploring future opportunities for further operational improvements.
- **Policy CC5 (Waste Minimisation and Water Efficiency):** Reducing waste through responsible procurement and recycling, managing water use effectively, and limiting environmental impacts associated with pollution and maintenance.

In summary, the nursery continues to operate in an environmentally responsible and socially valuable manner, with low impact on local infrastructure and resources. The proposal supports Reading Borough Council's wider goals of sustainable urban living, community resilience, and climate-conscious development.