

Memo

To: Catrin Davies

From: Cathy Holwill (RBC Ecology Consultations)

CC:

Date: 3 November 2025

Re: Planning application ref: PL/25/1348

Address: 250 BROOK DRIVE, READING, RG2 6UA

Description: Site alterations including new hardstanding and footpaths and their associated lighting, new bollards, planters, new and replacement CCTV and new ANPR, with associated electrical cabinet; new smoking shelter, bike shelter and associated charging and a new bus drop/pick up point with waiting shelter and pedestrian barriers and associated works.

The application site lies in Green Park and currently forms the landscaped grounds and car parking of the existing office unit at 250 Brook Drive. The site is located approximately 0.5 km to the northwest of Reading Football Ground and is bound by Brook Drive to the east and Foudry Brook (a lake/stream) to the north west and south west. To the northeast lies a standalone business / office unit and its car parking and landscaped ground at 200 Brook Drive. It is proposed to undertake a number of site alterations including new CCTV / ANPR units.

Ecological Impacts of the development:

The ecology report (RPS Group, September 2025) has been undertaken to the appropriate standard and concludes that the works are unlikely to affect protected species and priority habitats. There is a low risk of impacts on nesting birds during vegetation clearance (two trees and a short length of hedge will be removed) and but this can be minimised by ensuring vegetation clearance is undertaken outside the bird nesting season (March to August Inclusive). The recommendations should be secured through a planning condition – example wording beneath.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The development is subject to mandatory net gain requirements as outlined in Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The applicant has submitted a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment (RPS Group, September 2025) and a completed Statutory Metric. The assessment results indicate that the proposals will lead to a loss of -57.32 % net gain in habitat units and a net loss of -100% hedgerow units.

The baseline habitats appear to have been accurately accounted for in the Metric.

Consequently, if planning permission is granted, it will be contingent on meeting the pre-commencement general biodiversity net gain condition. This condition requires the submission and approval of a Biodiversity Gain Plan, demonstrating how a 10% increase in biodiversity value will be

achieved for the development whether through off site measures or if necessary and as a last resort, through statutory biodiversity credits. The applicant has indicated that the deficit will be addressed through use of off site measures and has submitted a draft plan for consideration. Should planning permission be granted, a final plan will need to be provided (and approved) prior to commencement of development - please refer to informative wording below.

Informative – Biodiversity Gain Condition

Please note that this permission is has been granted subject to the statutory condition ("the biodiversity gain condition") that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

Failure to submit a Biodiversity Gain Plan prior to the commencement of development is a breach of planning consent and may lead to formal enforcement action being taken that will require all development on site to cease.

You should ensure that works do not commence until Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the council and "the biodiversity gain condition" has been discharged.

Conditions:

Condition: All trees, hedges and shrubs or similar vegetation where birds may nest which are to be removed as part of the development, are to be cleared outside the bird-nesting season (March - August inclusive) or if clearance during the bird-nesting season cannot reasonably be avoided, a suitably qualified ecologist will check the areas to be removed immediately prior to clearance and advise whether nesting birds are present. If active nests are recorded, no vegetation clearance or other works that may disturb active nests shall proceed until all young have fledged the nest.

Reason: To ensure that wildlife is not adversely affected by the proposed development in line with wildlife legislation.