



N FAMILY CLUB - READING
3-5 CRAVEN ROAD, RG1 5LE

GARDEN POD - SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

May 2026

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Sustainability is central to N Family Club's philosophies as an education group and developer

1. INTRODUCTION & POLICY

N Family Club - Reading

Introduction

This Sustainability Statement supports the application for the installation of a high-quality external 'pod' classroom at N Family Club, 3-5 Craven Road, Reading.

As a certified B-Corp, N Family Club recognises its responsibility to improve environmental performance and de-carbonise operations, while also supporting its customers and supply chain to generate efficiencies.

Following the successful commencement of nursery operations in 2023, the setting has experienced significant demand, operating at over 90% capacity. These proposals represent a direct response to this local need, providing 32 additional much-needed childcare places within an established and successful early-years framework.

The pod is proposed at the rear of the existing garden in an undeveloped and under-utilised area of the site. Beyond its primary function as a classroom, the pod incorporates visible sustainable technologies to directly support the nursery's curriculum by introducing children to environmental stewardship and global responsibility at an early age.



N Family Club Reading existing extension wing in high quality, high performance materials

N Family Club - Reading

Commitment to Local Policy

In accordance with the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), this statement outlines the holistic approach taken to minimise the environmental footprint of the new structure.

Reading Borough Council has declared a Climate Emergency, with a target to be carbon neutral by 2030. To support this goal, the proposed pod has been designed with a “fabric-first” philosophy.

This document demonstrates how the proposal complies with the following key local policies:

- Policy CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
- Policy CC4: Decentralised Energy
- Policy CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
- Policy CC7 Design and the Public Realm
- Policy EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
- Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges, and Woodland
- Policy EN18: Flooding and Drainage
- Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters



N Family Club Reading's historic fabric was upgraded under the 2022-23 works

2. ENERGY STRATEGY

The proposed development integrates robust principles of sustainable design and construction. In accordance with Policies CC2, CC3, and CC4, the garden pod has been designed to meet and where possible exceed Approved Document (AD) Part L guidance, following the 'Be Lean, Be Clean, Be Green, Be Seen' energy hierarchy.

1. BE LEAN: USE LESS ENERGY

The design prioritises a "fabric-first" approach, utilising a high-performance building envelope and passive design strategies to minimize baseline energy demand.

Key Efficiency Measures:

- **Enhanced Thermal Envelope:** High-performance insulation within the walls, floor, and roof to achieve U-values that meet or exceed the requirements of AD Part L2, Table 4.1.
- **High-Spec Glazing:** Energy-efficient double glazing with low U-values to minimise thermal bridging.
- **Airtightness & Moisture Control:** The pod will be sealed at all critical junctions to minimize uncontrolled heat loss. Performance will be verified through pressure testing, using breathable materials to ensure structural longevity and internal air quality.
- **Passive Design:** Strategic use of rooflights and operable windows to maximise natural daylighting and facilitate natural ventilation via the stack effect, reducing reliance on artificial lighting and mechanical cooling.

2. BE CLEAN: SUPPLY ENERGY EFFICIENTLY

Energy is supplied via high-efficiency systems in line with the wider site's infrastructure to ensure optimised consumption.

Key System Measures:

- **Heat Recovery Technology:** The nursery uses low-carbon heat pump technology across the site in lieu of traditional gas-fired heating, lowering the carbon footprint.
- **Smart Energy Management:** Integration into a centralised Building Management System (BMS) allows for real-time monitoring and precision control of internal temperatures.
- **Automated Controls:** Occupancy sensors and centralised overrides ensure units are not active when the space is vacant, preventing energy wastage.
- **Resource Monitoring:** Sub-metering of power and water supplies, alongside flow-rate restrictors and leak detection, ensures compliance with Building Regulations and encourages sustainable user behaviour.

3. BE GREEN: USE RENEWABLE ENERGY

The nursery is entirely fossil-free, operating entirely on renewable energy sources via a green energy tariff from Ecotricity, ensuring that all power used is generated by renewable wind and solar sources. The nursery is entirely gas and oil-free, utilising 100% electric air-handling and VRF units.

4. BE SEEN: MONITOR & REPORT

In line with the "Be Seen" requirement, the site commits to ongoing monitoring of energy performance. Data will be collected via smart meters, and a centrally managed BMS is used to analyse performance against design projections, ensuring the pod remains exemplar of sustainable nursery infrastructure.



The 'Be Lean, Be Clean, Be Green, Be Seen' hierarchy

3. MATERIAL SOURCING

The selection of materials for the proposed garden pod is driven by a commitment to circular economy principles and the reduction of embodied carbon. In accordance with Policies CC2 and CC7, the specification focuses on durability, environmental performance, and aesthetic harmony.

1. SUSTAINABLE FABRIC STRATEGY (POLICY CC2)

To minimise the carbon footprint of the construction phase, the primary structure utilises timber framing rather than carbon-intensive steel or concrete.

- **Carbon Sequestration:** By opting for a timber-led approach, the structure acts as a natural carbon sink, effectively sequestering CO₂ within the fabric of the building for its entire operational lifespan.
- **Low-Impact Insulation:** Thermal performance is achieved through the use of high-recycled-content insulation (such as mineral wool or wood fibre). These materials are specified for their low “cradle-to-gate” emissions, ensuring that the energy used in manufacture is kept to a minimum.

2. LOCAL CHARACTER & AESTHETIC INTEGRATION (POLICY CC7)

The external palette has been carefully curated to ensure the new intervention remains sensitive to the existing built environment.

- **Material Harmony:** The pod will be finished in natural timber cladding. This ensures a seamless aesthetic integration with the existing nursery extension, maintaining a cohesive architectural language across the site.

- **Durability and Longevity:** By selecting high-quality, weather-resistant finishes, the proposal ensures the building will age gracefully, reducing the need for intensive maintenance or premature material replacement.

3. RESPONSIBLE PROCUREMENT

In line with life-cycle environmental impact assessments, preference is given to materials that are:

- **Locally Sourced:** Where feasible, materials will be procured from local supply chains to reduce transportation emissions.
- **Recyclable at End-of-Life:** The assembly methods for the pod prioritise “design for dis-assembly,” allowing materials to be recovered and repurposed at the end of the structure’s functional life, thereby supporting a circular construction economy.

As a Certified B Corp, N Family Reading operates under a rigorous mandate to balance profit with social and environmental purpose. This commitment ensures that the garden pod’s sustainability extends beyond its physical construction into its long-term operational life, ensuring an ethical supply chain and responsible procurement during the in-use stage.



Materials to match existing language at N Reading

4. WASTE MANAGEMENT

In accordance with Policy CC5, the project adopts a hierarchical approach to resource management, prioritising prevention, reuse, and recycling.

By utilising Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), the proposal significantly reduces the environmental impact associated with traditional building projects.

1. CONSTRUCTION WASTE & PRE-FABRICATION (POLICY CC5)

The nursery will seek to mitigate the impact of the construction works, with a commitment to diverting non-hazardous construction waste from landfill.

- **Off-Site Manufacturing:** Where possible, elements of the pod will be designed for off-site pre-fabrication. This enables precision engineering to minimise “cut-off” waste.
- **Circular Material Economy:** materials are prioritised that are either high in recycled content, or fully recyclable at the end of their lifecycle, ensuring the pod remains a sustainable asset through to its eventual disassembly.
- **Reduced On-Site Logistics:** using pre-fabricated elements, the pod is delivered as a precision-engineered unit, reducing on-site waste compared to traditional masonry construction.

2. POLLUTION REDUCTION

Using off-site building techniques where possible, the project seeks to protect the nursery’s immediate environment, minimising impact on the existing site.

- **Noise and Air Quality:** Shifting the build process off-site significantly reduces the duration of

on-site works, minimising noise disruption and dust (particulate matter) pollution - a critical consideration in an early years setting.

- **Site Stewardship:** This proposed construction methods avoid the risk of soil or water contamination from “wet trades” (such as on-site concrete mixing) where possible, ensuring the local ecosystem is preserved during the installation phase.

3. EFFICIENT LAND USE

The proposal represents a sustainable approach to site development.

- **Repurposing Underused Land:** The pod is strategically located on an underutilised portion of the existing site. By maximising the utility of this space, we are providing essential educational infrastructure without encroaching on new, undeveloped land.
- **Efficient Footprint:** This “small-footprint” solution provides a high-density utility that aligns with the principles of efficient urban intensification.

4. OPERATIONAL WASTE (IN-USE)

Once operational, the pod will be fully integrated into the nursery’s established waste and recycling strategy:

- **Source Segregation:** In line with Policy CC5, the nursery already operates with dedicated storage for segregated waste streams (recycling, food waste, clinical, and general waste). The existing provisions are suitably sized to accommodate the additional load of the pod.

- **B Corp Accountability:** As a Certified B Corp, N Family Reading monitors all waste outputs to identify reduction opportunities, ensuring the pod supports our overarching goal of zero-waste-to-landfill.
- **Education Opportunity:** N Family recognises that waste management is a core part of our global responsibility, and includes activities such as litter picking and recycling sorting stations as part of the nursery curriculum



Children engaging in community litter picks

5. CLIMATE ADAPTATION

In accordance with Policies CC3 and EN18, the proposal adopts a proactive approach to climate resilience, focusing on thermal comfort and water management to combat extreme weather events.

1. MITIGATING OVERHEATING & THERMAL COMFORT (POLICY CC3)

As global temperatures rise, the design prioritises passive cooling over energy-intensive mechanical solutions to ensure a safe and comfortable learning environment:

- **Passive Cooling & Solar Shading:** The pod incorporates deep reveals to the windows on the primary facade to intercept solar gain before it enters the building envelope. High quality low-e glazing is proposed, to reflect heat in the summer, whilst permitting daylight. Additionally, blinds are proposed internally in a light coloured fabric, further reflecting any direct sunlight and reducing overheating during hot weather events.
- **Natural Cross-Ventilation:** The strategic placement of operable windows and rooflights facilitates natural cross-ventilation and the “stack effect.” This allows warm air to be purged efficiently, maintaining a comfortable internal climate during peak summer months without the need for mechanical ventilation.
- **Fabric Resilience:** The high-performance external envelope outlined in the “Be Lean” section works to retain heat in winter, and provide a protection against extreme heat in the summer.

2. SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE & SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT (POLICY EN18)

The project is designed to manage water responsibly and mitigate the risk of localised flooding:

- **SuDS Principles:** In line with Policy EN18, the proposal is designed to carefully manage surface water. To prevent increased surface water runoff, any new ground treatments will use permeable surfacing, slowing water ground infiltration.
- **Efficient Land Management:** the pod is proposed on an area of the site that is currently hardstanding. Therefore, the development does not result in the loss of any soft landscaping or natural infiltration zones.
- **Run-off Attenuation:** Specific measures, such as gravel margins (in non-child accessed areas) rainwater harvesting butts, and bioretention planters, can be implemented where necessary to slow the rate of run-off and ensure the development does not contribute to hydraulic stress on the local sewer network.

3. FUTURE-PROOFING FOR LONGEVITY

By combining high-specification materials with passive design, the pod is “future-proofed” against the increasing frequency of heatwaves and heavy rainfall events. This ensures that N Family Reading can continue to provide a high-quality, safe environment for children despite climatic shifts, adhering to our overarching B Corp commitment to responsible stewardship.



Rainwater management as an educational tool

6. BIODIVERSITY

In accordance with Policies EN12 and EN14, the proposal has been designed to protect existing green infrastructure while proactively introducing new habitats to support local flora and fauna.

1. URBAN ECOLOGY & HABITAT CREATION (POLICY EN12)

While the scale of the development falls below the threshold for statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), N Family Reading is committed to delivering a voluntary net increase in biodiversity. The project offers opportunity to introduce high-quality ecological features to support a variety of species:

- **Avian & Invertebrate Support:** bird nesting boxes and a bespoke insect “hotel” can be introduced to provide essential refuge and breeding sites, enhancing the “ecological stepping stones” within the urban environment of Reading.
- **Bioretention Landscaping:** A new bioretention planter adjacent to the pod can provide new soft landscaping with native, pollinator-friendly planting while also acting as a natural filtration system for rainwater run-off.
- **Educational Value:** In line with our B Corp values, these biodiversity features will serve as an interactive “living classroom,” allowing children to engage with and learn about local wildlife and the importance of conservation.

2. TREE PROTECTION & ROOT HEALTH (POLICY EN14)

The protection of existing trees and hedges is a priority of the site layout and construction methodology:

- **Strategic Siting:** The pod has been carefully positioned to sit entirely outside the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of all existing trees and boundary hedges. This ensures the long-term health and stability of the site’s established green screening.
- **Low-Impact Foundations:** To further safeguard the subterranean environment, the pod utilises a low-disturbance foundation system. By avoiding deep concrete footings or extensive excavation, ground disruption and compaction is minimised, preserving the soil structure.
- **Zero Encroachment:** During the installation phase, tree protection measures will be enforced to ensure no construction activity or material storage impacts the surrounding vegetation.

3. HOLISTIC GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

By combining sensitive structural engineering with targeted habitat creation, the proposal ensures that the garden pod does not just “occupy” the land, but actively enriches the site’s natural capital. This approach aligns with Policy EN12 by ensuring that the development results in a measurable, positive contribution to the local environment.



Environmental stewardship is a pillar of N's curriculum

7. TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL

In accordance with Policy TR3, the proposal demonstrates a balanced approach to site access, ensuring that the intensification of the nursery remains compatible with the local highway network while actively promoting sustainable travel modes.

1. SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT & ACTIVE TRAVEL

N Family Reading is committed to minimising the environmental impact of nursery-related travel:

- **Prioritising Active Travel:** The site is well-positioned to encourage walking, cycling, and scooting. N Family Club continue to support families and staff in choosing low-carbon, active travel options over private vehicle use. One new Sheffield Stand cycle hoop is proposed in line with the recommendations of the Transport Statement, alongside the existing cycle parking, buggy, and scooter storage.
- **B Corp Alignment:** In line with our B Corp stewardship, we actively encourage sustainable commuting patterns through the nursery's travel plan, helping to reduce the overall carbon footprint of the Reading site.
- **Concentrating Provisions:** By enhancing facilities at this location, we minimise the need for the introduction of new childcare facilities elsewhere in Reading.

2. PARKING CAPACITY & OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

While the garden pod allows for a minor uplift in the site's operational capacity, the existing infrastructure is well-equipped to manage this:

- **Existing Car Park Provision:** As outlined in the Transport Assessment, a study of the current site confirms that the existing car park is considered sufficient to accommodate the marginal increase in occupancy given the proximity to local businesses and residential areas.
- **Sibling Dynamics:** It is important to note that an increase in child places does not directly equate to a linear increase in vehicle movements. A significant proportion of our intake consists of siblings, meaning a single vehicle journey often accounts for multiple children, thereby naturally limiting the impact on the highway.
- **Promotion of Car Sharing:** As part of our commitment to reducing emissions, N Family Reading actively encourages car-sharing among staff and parents where active travel is not feasible. This reduces the number of individual vehicle arrivals and ensures the parking area operates at peak efficiency.

3. INCLUSIVE ACCESS & HIGHWAY SAFETY (POLICY TR3)

The project adheres to the principles of universal design, ensuring the nursery remains a safe and inclusive space for all:

- **Universal Access:** The pod is located on a level area of the site, providing seamless, step-free access for users with mobility impairments or pushchairs. The design ensures full compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations.

- **Safety & Visibility:** The placement of the pod ensures that internal circulation within the site remains clear and safe. There is a neutral impact on highway safety, ensuring that pedestrian and vehicle movements are managed effectively within the nursery boundary.



Sustainable travel is promoted by the nursery

8. CONCLUSION

By addressing Energy, Materials, Waste, Climate Adaptation, Biodiversity, and Transport, this sustainability statement provides a comprehensive framework that aligns the proposed garden pod with local planning policies. The proposal represents a high-performance, low-impact intervention that enhances educational provision while protecting the environment and local community.

A HOLISTIC IMPACT STRATEGY

As a Certified B Corp, N Family Club recognises its responsibility to improve environmental performance and de-carbonise operations, while also supporting its customers and supply chain to generate efficiencies. Sustainability is not a standalone feature of this application; it is woven into the very fabric of the N Curriculum through 'Global Responsibility' and child-led discovery.

This includes hands-on habits such as litter picks, learning to sort waste into recycling/compost, and teaching children to turn off taps and lights. Our commitment to environmental excellence is evidenced by the fact that 39 of our nurseries have achieved the Eco-Schools Green Flag award, a global mark of excellence in environmental education.

ENVIRONMENTAL & PHYSICAL WELLBEING

The garden pod has been designed to promote a deep connection with nature, fostering healthy habits and promoting physical and mental wellbeing:

- **Outdoor & Nature-Based Learning:** Every child at N Family Club spends time outdoors each day. Our settings offer Forest School-inspired activities ranging from planting herbs and weather mapping to learning about climate awareness and the food chain.
- **Curated Material Palette:** Within the nursery spaces, the material palette balances operational safety with environmental consideration. Products are selected to promote a feeling of calm, using natural textures and high-quality, durable finishes to ensure longevity. Materials are locally sourced, recyclable, or certified where possible, and non-toxic, low-VOC finishes are prioritised to ensure healthy environments.
- **Seasonal Nutrition:** Each nursery employs an in-house chef to provide freshly cooked meals each day. The menu is updated on a regular basis, centred around seasonal produce to reduce carbon "food miles."
- **Waste Stewardship:** The nurseries operate a robust waste management system, underpinned by a zero-waste-to-landfill policy and creative recycling stations that engage children in the circular economy.
- **Local Employment:** Our locations provide critical employment for the Reading community. As a certified 'Great Place to Work', we offer an inclusive culture, career progression through the N Academy, and competitive pay.
- **Widening Access:** We provide a number of fully funded nursery places across our settings to help families who need additional support, aiming to widen access to high-quality early education.
- **Charitable Partnerships:** We have built strong charitable partnerships over the years, raising over £200,000 for War Child and partnering with brands like Pura to donate thousands of nappies to baby banks.

SUMMARY

N Family Club is focused on creating a better world for future generations, and consideration is given to the impact of all areas of the business.

Aside from the high-performance building and servicing design, the nursery is committed to further reducing the carbon footprint of its operations by encouraging sustainable travel and educating our team, families, and children on environmental awareness.

This proposal ensures that N Family Reading remains an exemplar of sustainable educational infrastructure, fully aligned with the requirements of Policies CC2, CC3, CC5, and EN12.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY & COMMUNITY VALUE

N Family Club's comprehensive Impact Strategy is built on three pillars: Planet, People, and Positive Futures. Beyond the building's design, we are committed to social excellence:



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