

Memo

To: Catrin Davies

From: Cathy Holwill (RBC Ecology Consultations)

CC:

Date: 27 May 2026

Re: Planning application ref: PL/26/0620

Address: 1A, New Road, Reading, RG1 5JD

Description: The erection of a dwelling with new vehicle access, parking, cycle and bin store with associated hard and soft landscaping.

The application site is an area of land close to the Reading University grounds where it is proposed to erect a detached dwelling. The site lies on a Green Link as per Policy EN12 of the Reading Local Plan

The application is similar to planning application PL/25/1471 which was withdrawn. Our response to that application was to request an updated ecological assessment of the site and a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculation to demonstrate how the development would comply with Policy EN12.

Previously we had requested an updated ecological assessment of the site as the report submitted for the last application was out of date and therefore could not be relied upon. A Baseline Habitat Condition Assessment (BHCA) report (Arbtech, January 2026) has now been submitted. However whilst this report supports the BNG assessment, it does not comprise a full updated ecological appraisal of the site as requested – which would usually comprise a consideration of protected species constraints.

A BNG metric calculation in the form of a spreadsheet and a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (Arbtech, February 2026)

However this calculation appears to be incorrect for the following reasons:

- (a) The tree report submitted states that a tree on the site as a DBH of 630mm.

This would be classified as a **Large** tree as per the Statutory Metric guidelines – extract shown beneath:

Table 15 Tree size classes and area equivalents

Size class	Diameter at breast height (cm)	Biodiversity metric area equivalent (ha)
Small	greater than 7.5cm and less than or equal to 30cm	0.0041
Medium	greater than 30cm and less than or equal to 60cm	0.0163
Large	greater than 60cm and less than or equal to 90cm	0.0366
Very large	greater than 90cm	0.0765

I.e. a large tree would be represented in the metric with an area of 0.0366 hectares.

However the metric calculation identifies the tree as having an area of 0.0163 hectares. This is incorrect as 0.0163 hectares corresponds to a **medium** tree classification.

(b) The metric calculation shows that the tree will not be retained.

As such, an updated and corrected spreadsheet calculation is therefore required that addresses the above points. The accompanying BNG report will also need to be updated. Furthermore, updated ecological survey information is still required to adequately assess the full impacts of the proposed works on protected species.

Without this information, we are unable to confirm the baseline habitat value of the site or fully assess the ecological impacts of the proposed scheme