

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Norcot Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0742 Full planning permission

Address: 67 AMBLECOTE ROAD, TILEHURST, READING, RG30 4BS

Proposal: Single storey extension and associated alterations to create a separate one-bedroom residential dwelling and associated work

Applicant: Mr D Stannard

Received date: 04/06/2026

Target Decision date: 18/08/2026

Case Officer: Catrin Davies

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

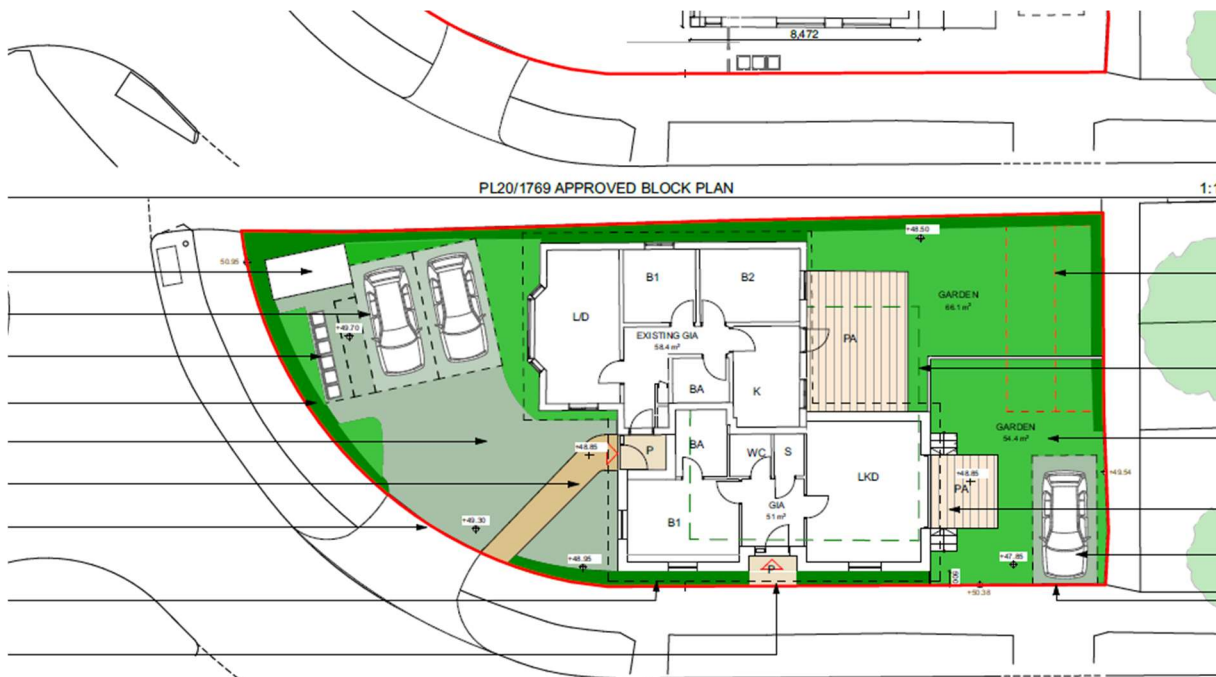
67 Amblecote Road is a detached bungalow located on a corner plot, which is stepped in from the boundaries. There are varying ground levels on the site and the detached garage at the rear is at a lower level than the property. The property has a low boundary fence to the front, and a close boarded timber fence for the remainder.



The surrounding area is predominantly residential with similar style semi-detached bungalows; however the application site along with No.100 Amblecote road (across the road from the application site) are unique in their size, and detached nature. There are some two storey semi-detached properties in the cul-de-sac and further along Amblecote Road.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application seeks planning permission for a one bedroom single storey dwelling which would be located on land to the east of the existing bungalow. The proposal includes two parking spaces for the existing dwelling with new access proposed and one parking at the existing access.



Plans and document submitted:

2708 001P1- Location Plan
2708 002P4- Existing and Proposed Block Plan
2708 004P3- Existing and Proposed elevations
2708 003P4- existing and proposed plans
Technical Note: Transport Implications
Design and Access Statement

Planning History

201769/HOU- Single storey extension. Demolition of garage. Permitted.

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

Transport Development Control

The site is located within Zone 3 – Secondary Core Area – as defined in the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. It occupies a corner plot currently developed with a single three-bedroom bungalow.

This application proposes to subdivide the existing dwelling to create two semi-detached bungalows comprising one one-bedroom unit and one two-bedroom unit. A new access and parking area is proposed to the south of the site to serve the existing dwelling.

In accordance with the adopted SPD, a Class C3 use in this location would require a total of 2.0 parking spaces (rounded up from 1.5) for the existing dwelling, and 1 parking space for the proposed one-bedroom dwelling.

The applicant has indicated that parking for the new one-bedroom unit will utilise the existing vehicular access. The currently installed gates are to be removed and replaced with sliding gates. This arrangement is considered acceptable

Proposed Layout.

A new vehicular access is proposed to serve the existing dwelling. Visibility splays have been calculated and are illustrated on the submitted plans.

The submitted Technical Note includes ATC calculations supporting visibility splays of 2.4m x 19m. However, the illustrated splays extend across land within the applicant's control where an existing boundary fence exceeds 0.6m in height. This would result in an obstruction within the required visibility envelope.

To ensure safe and adequate visibility, appropriate measures must be secured to maintain the splays free from obstruction. It is noted that Manual for Streets allows some flexibility, and the 'X' distance could be reduced to 2.0m, resulting in a visibility splay of 2.0m x 19m. This relaxation may be acceptable in this location.

Accordingly, revised plans are required showing:

- Updated visibility splays (potentially 2.0m x 19m); and
- Confirmation of boundary treatments within the splay, demonstrating that no obstruction above 0.6m in height will be present.

The creation of the new access, including the partial removal of the grass verge, will require a licence from the Highway Authority.

The Council's Local Transport Plan 3 (2011–2026) supports the provision of infrastructure to enable low-carbon travel, including electric vehicle (EV) charging. In addition, Policy TR5 of the adopted Local Plan (November 2019) requires all new dwellings to be provided with EV charging facilities. Details of the EV charging point, should be provided and illustrated on the submitted plans.

In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the proposed dwelling is required to provide secure cycle parking for a minimum of one cycle. This should comprise a conveniently located, lockable and covered store. No cycle storage provision has been demonstrated on the submitted plans.

Bin storage and collection arrangements must be provided in accordance with Manual for Streets and BS 5906:2005 (Waste Management in Buildings). Bin stores should be located no more than 15m from the collection point to avoid prolonged standing of refuse vehicles on the carriageway. The submitted plans do not illustrate bin storage or collection arrangements for the proposed dwelling.

Ecology Consultations

The application site comprises a detached bungalow and garage surrounded by habitat suitable for use by foraging and commuting bats, including connected gardens with tree lines connecting to grassland and woodland within Prospect Park Local Wildlife Site to the south and woodland in the wider landscape. The site lies adjacent to a Green Link as per Policy EN12. The plans include the demolition of the garage as well as the addition of a single storey extension to create a separate residential dwelling.

Given the age and construction of the existing buildings and the proximity of suitable bat habitat, insufficient information has been provided to determine whether the buildings have potential to support roosting bats. The bungalow and the garage may contain features suitable for use by roosting bats and

as such, there is a reasonable likelihood that the proposals may affect roosting bats. As a bat survey has not been submitted it is therefore not possible to adequately assess the impacts of the scheme on bats which are a protected species. It is therefore not possible to determine whether the proposals comply with relevant legislation and planning policy.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

From 2024, it is a legal requirement under the Environment Act 2021 that all developments (unless exempt) must demonstrate a net gain of at least 10%.

The applicant has stated in the DAS that the proposals are not subject to BNG as the proposals will lead to a total net loss of less than 25m². The applicant appears to have misunderstood the basis of the de minimis exemption which relates to the extent of habitat affected by development rather than the net habitat value after development. For reference the de minimis exemption from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain generally applies where development does not impact less than 25 m² of area habitat or less than 5 metres of linear habitat (for eg hedges)

As more than 25 m² of on-site habitat will be affected, the proposals do not appear to meet the de minimis exemption and a BNG assessment is required.

No Biodiversity Net Gain assessment has been submitted and currently there is insufficient information to demonstrate compliance with mandatory BNG requirements or with local plan policies H11 and EN12. Planning

Summary

No bat survey has been submitted. As such it is not possible to assess the impacts of the proposals on bats which are a protected species and a material consideration in the planning process.

Furthermore insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate compliance with mandatory BNG requirements. The applicant has incorrectly argued that the de minimis exemption applies to the scheme and therefore no BNG calculation and assessment has been submitted. As such, it is not possible for the Council to conclude that the proposals will comply local and national planning policy.

For these reasons, the application is not supported as insufficient ecological information has been submitted.

Planning Natural Environment

With reference to the EXISTING APPROVED AND PROPOSED BLOCK PLAN, 4th June 2026, Drawing No. 002, Rev: P4, I note that the rear of the existing site is hard surfacing/developed. So, the level of green space shown in said plan, is certainly a positive enhancement. A concern is that removing this hard surfacing, and replacing it with soft landscaping, may impact the RPAs (no tree-related information provided). It may be the RPAs do not extend into the site due to the existing development, but it's difficult to assess this without any tree information.

The parking area to the left is made of grasscrete, which is positive – I'm slightly unclear why concrete is being proposed in a soft landscaped garden for the singular parking space to the right? I would have assumed grasscrete here would be desirable, as it would 'fit in' better with a lawned garden, than concrete. On the key, concrete and gravel are the same colour, but gravel would be better for drainage and soil compaction purposes. But the material that is truly proposed is unclear as in the said key below:

The increased greenery of the site is certainly positive, albeit I don't note any tree planting. This site is close proximity to an AQMA and Green Link, as shown in the iShare extract below:

The development will be supported by us in principle, however, how the existing surfacing/development removal and new landscaping will impact RPAs is difficult to predict due to lack of tree information. So,

could you please request a basic tree survey, plotting trunk positions, canopy spreads, RPAs (and evidence of how they have been calculated i.e. measurement of the trunks in diameter at breast height), and any facilitative pruning to the trees to the rear to facilitate the works? I note quite a lot of native hedging has been proposed, but a new tree would certainly be even more positive (to see a net gain in tree numbers)

Public Consultation

A site notice was displayed at the application site as and no neighbour letters of representation were received.

4. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' (Policy S3). However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.

In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

Local Plan Partial Update

The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A consultation version of the draft update of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024.

Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become "out of date" when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example. Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to these applications listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be 'out of date'

The Local Plan Partial Update was submitted to the Secretary of State on 9th May 2025. Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this application is that they remain in accordance with national policy (aside from Policy H1, which is acknowledged to be out-of-date) and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the submission draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be 'out of date' (aside from Policy H1).

Relevant Policies:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2026, with a particular focus on:
Chapter 3. Decision-making policies

Chapter 4. Achieving sustainable development
Chapter 5. Meeting the challenge of climate change
Chapter 12. Making efficient use of land
Chapter 14. Achieving well-designed places
Chapter 16. Promoting healthy communities
Chapter 19. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (Nov 2019)

CC1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction)
CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change)
CC5 (Waste Minimisation and Storage)
CC6 (Accessibility and the Intensity of Development)
CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)
CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)
CC9 (Securing Infrastructure)
EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network)
EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland)
EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources)
H1 (Provision of Housing)
H2 (Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix)
H3 (Affordable Housing)
H5 (Standards for New Housing)
H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space)
H11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens)
TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters)
TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging)

Supplementary planning documents/guidance

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)
Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2021)
Planning Obligations Under Section 106 (2015)
Tree Strategy (March 2021)
Local Transport Strategy 2040 (2024)

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

5. APPRAISAL

Land use principles

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) continues to support the effective use of land and places emphasis on directing development towards previously developed (brownfield) land where appropriate. In particular, the Framework seeks to make efficient use of land whilst safeguarding environmental interests

and supporting sustainable patterns of development. It also provides support for the redevelopment of suitable previously developed land, recognising the contribution such sites can make towards meeting development needs.

Previously developed land is defined within the NPPF as land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition excludes land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land developed for minerals extraction or landfill where restoration has been secured; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land where the remains of permanent structures have blended into the landscape.

Based on the above definition, the site would not be classified as previously developed land. As such, it would not benefit from the policy support afforded to the redevelopment of brownfield land and should instead be assessed against the relevant policies relating to development on undeveloped land.

Notwithstanding, Policy H11 (which is read in conjunction with Policy CC7) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (Development of Private Residential Gardens) includes policies relating to appropriate development of residential gardens (detailed below).

Policy H2 of the Reading Borough Local Plans states that the appropriate density of residential development will be informed by:

- The character and mix of uses of the area in which it is located;
- Its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;
- The need to achieve high quality design;
- The need to maximise the efficiency of land use; and
- The need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.

There is no in-principle objection to residential use in itself within this residential area. However, this is subject to the more detailed considerations of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the NPPF 2026. As the remainder of this report demonstrates, the proposal has failed to satisfactorily meet a number of other policy criteria.

Design and Character

Policy CC7 aims to preserve or enhance the character of the area in which a development is in terms of layout, landscape, density, scale, height, massing, architectural detail and materials.

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- The need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.

Policy H11 requires that new residential development that involves land within the curtilage or the former curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable where:

1. *"The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:*

- a. *The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area;*
 - b. *A layout which integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas, and existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage;*
 - c. *Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries. This includes features such as the variety of trees, hardstanding/lawns and hedges, etc;*
 - d. *Compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area;*
 - e. *The materials and elevational detail. These should be high quality, and where appropriate distinctive and/ or complementary;*
 - f. *The arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and their rhythm between buildings.*
2. *The application site provides a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking;*
 3. *The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards;*
 4. *The proposal does not lead to tandem development;*
 5. *The design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas, and avoids the need for additional physical security measures;*
 6. *The proposal does not cause a significant detrimental impact to the amenity of adjacent and nearby occupants;*
 7. *The emphasis is on the provision of family-sized housing;*
 8. *The development provides biodiversity net gain wherever possible, and would not have an adverse impact on biodiversity in terms of the fragmentation of blocks of gardens, which as a unit or in association with adjacent green space are deemed to make an important contribution to biodiversity and contribute to the green network; and*
 9. *The proposal does not prejudice the satisfactory development of a wider area."*

Policy code CC3.1 (d) of the NPPF 2026 states that development proposals should "include green infrastructure and suitable tree planting in accordance with policies DP3 (2) (c) and N3".

Policy code L2.1 (d) (i) of the NPPF 2026 states that proposals should "Be consistent with the overall street scene, other than where: it is appropriate to have larger buildings (such as at street corners, or where building upwards would not cause substantial harm to the character of a building and its surroundings); the development would not be visible from the street frontage"

Policy code L3.1 of the NPPF 2026 states that proposals should "make efficient use of land, taking into account the identified need for different types of housing and other development, local market conditions, the availability of infrastructure (including that supporting sustainable transport modes) and its scope for improvement, a site's connectivity and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places"

Policy code L3.2 (a) of the NPPF 2026 states that to contribute to making efficient use of land "Within settlements, development proposals for residential and mixed-use development should contribute to an increase in the density of the area in which they are situated. The only exception is where there is a clear justification that this is either inappropriate or not possible (for example, where the prevailing density is already very high, the nature of the accommodation required precludes higher densities, or where it would conflict with other policies in this Framework). In considering the potential to increase densities, the existing character of an area should be taken into account, in accordance with policy DP3, but should not preclude development which makes the most of an area's potential"

Policy code DP3.1 of the NPPF 2026 states that development proposals should "respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance

their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets.”

Policy code DP3.2 (c) of the NPPF 2026 states that proposals should “incorporate and/or connect to a network of high quality, accessible, multifunctional green infrastructure to provide opportunities for recreation and healthy living, strengthen habitats, improve climate change resilience and improve air and water quality. This should include maintaining and enhancing tree cover”

Policy code DP3.2 (e) of the NPPF 2026 states that proposals should “use the pattern of buildings to define the arrangement of streets, squares and other spaces, promote compact forms of development to optimise the site’s potential, distinguish between public and private areas, create focal points and, where appropriate, enhance views into and out of the scheme”

Policy code DP3.2 (g) of the NPPF 2026 states that proposals should “create visually attractive, distinctive and characterful development to establish or maintain a strong sense of place and pride, including through the use of a coherent palette of materials, design features and planting”

Policy code DP3.3 of the NPPF 2026 state that proposals “should be refused if, without clear justification, they conflict with paragraph 1 of this policy or relevant aspects of the principles in paragraph 2, or with any explicit design standards set out in the development plan (including those in locally specific policies, guides, codes or masterplans). Substantial weight should be given to compliance with relevant development plan policies when assessing the design quality of proposals”

Policy code N2.1 (d) of the NPPF 2026 states that proposals should “Conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic or nature conservation value (such as established trees and hedgerows) where possible; and use appropriate landscaping to help create a well-designed place and integrate the development into its surroundings”

Policy code N2.1 (e) of the NPPF 2026 states that proposals should “Use green infrastructure provided as part of the scheme and nature-based solutions to secure multiple benefits: such as for biodiversity; surface water and pollution management (including maintaining flow rates and water quality); climate change mitigation and adaptation, and recreation”

Policy code N3.1 (a) of the NPPF 2026 states that proposals should “Make new streets tree-lined (unless there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate in specific streets), and incorporate trees in other suitable locations, such as in parks and through the provision of community orchards”

Policy code N3.1 (b) of the NPPF 2026 states that proposals should “Ensure that the selection of species and their placement is compatible with highways and other infrastructure requirements and the needs of different users of public spaces; and will be effective in helping to adapt to the effects of climate change and delivering other environmental benefits. Suitable arboricultural advice should be sought, and proposals discussed with highways and trees officers where necessary, so that the right trees are planted in the right places”

The proposed bungalow would occupy a highly prominent corner plot position at the end of the row of dwellings where the road curves around the site. Owing to its siting forward of the existing dwelling and its position immediately adjacent to the side boundary, the development would be particularly conspicuous within the street scene and would have a greater visual presence than development on a more enclosed plot.

Whilst the proposal would retain areas of parking and open space to the front and rear, the bungalow would extend across a substantial proportion of the plot width. When viewed alongside the associated areas of hardstanding, the proposal would result in an extensive spread of development across the site.

The scale of the proposed building and the proportion of the site occupied by built form and hard surfaced areas would result in a high level of site coverage. The cumulative effect of the dwelling and vehicle parking areas would erode the openness currently experienced on this prominent corner plot and create a visually cluttered appearance -exacerbated by the bin and bike stores

The relationship between the proposed built form, parking areas and remaining spaces would fail to reflect the established pattern of development in the locality. In particular, the proposal would not respond positively to the site's corner position, where a greater degree of openness contributes to the character of the streetscene and provides visual relief between buildings. The constrained nature of the layout would also limit opportunities for meaningful soft landscaping, including tree planting, and would fail to successfully accommodate ancillary features such as bin and cycle storage without adding further visual clutter to the site. The development would therefore appear cramped within the plot, with the extent of development giving rise to an overly intensive form of residential use.

As a consequence, the proposal would fail to make a positive contribution to the character of the area. The layout would not successfully integrate with the surrounding pattern of development in terms of plot coverage, spacing and the relationship between built form and open space. Furthermore, the density and disposition of development would represent an inefficient and harmful use of the site that would result in an overdeveloped appearance. The proposal would therefore conflict with the objectives of Policies CC7, H2 and H11, which seek development that responds positively to local character, achieves high-quality design and respects the established pattern of development within residential areas.

This harmful arrangement together with the visual prominence would result in harm to the street scene and character of the area. Policy code DP3.3 of the NPPF 2026 is clear that proposals should be refused if they conflict with policy code DP3.1 or DP3.2 or design standards set out in the development plan. For the reasons given above, the proposals would not successfully respond to their context and would not integrate with and enhance their surroundings as required by policy code DP3.1 Furthermore, the proposals would not enhance tree cover, would not successfully optimise the site's potential and would not create a visually attractive development or maintain a strong sense of place as required by policy code DP3.3

Residential Amenity

Policy CC8 requires that "Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:

- Privacy and overlooking;
- Access to sunlight and daylight;
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;
- Harm to outlook ..."

Additionally, Policy EN16 states that "development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors through land, noise or light pollution."

Policy H10 states that "Dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space, including green space wherever possible, that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children's play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space. Houses will be provided with private outdoor space.....The design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity". The supporting text (H10) states that dwellings should be provided with the same amount of outdoor space as the internal floor area.

Policy P3.1 of the NPPF 2026 requires development proposals to provide healthy, safe and inclusive places, whilst Policy P3.2 seeks to ensure that development provides a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Amenity of future occupiers

Whilst the proposed bungalow would provide accommodation that accords with nationally described space standards and all habitable rooms would be served by windows providing outlook and natural light, concerns remain regarding the quality of the living environment that would be afforded to both future occupiers of the proposed dwelling and the occupants of the existing property.

The proposed bedroom windows would be located in close proximity to the adjacent public footpath, resulting in opportunities for direct views into habitable rooms and creating both actual and perceived overlooking. This relationship would provide future occupiers with a reduced level of privacy, particularly given the single-storey nature of the dwelling and the position of the windows relative to pedestrian activity. The close proximity of the dwelling to the site boundaries and associated boundary treatments would also result in a confined relationship that would contribute to an undue sense of enclosure and reduce the quality of outlook available from these rooms.

In addition, the access and parking arrangements serving the existing dwelling would be located immediately adjacent to the proposed bedroom windows. Future occupiers would therefore be exposed to noise and disturbance associated with vehicle movements, together with light intrusion from vehicle headlights entering and leaving the site. There would also be direct overlooking into this window from the uses of the front garden. In addition, the proximity of parked vehicles, boundary fencing and other enclosing features would further diminish the outlook from these rooms and reinforce the constrained nature of the living environment, in addition to restricting daylight and sunlight. It is considered that this relationship would fail to provide a satisfactory level of residential amenity.

The proposed private outdoor amenity space would also be limited in size and functionality. Whilst outdoor space would be provided, part of this area would be occupied by parking provision, thereby reducing the amount of usable recreational and functional space available to future occupiers. The resulting garden area would be significantly smaller than that generally associated with properties in the locality and would not provide a high-quality external living environment.

The proposal would similarly diminish the amenity enjoyed by the occupants of the existing dwelling through a substantial reduction in the size of the remaining rear garden. Furthermore, the close relationship between the proposed and existing dwellings, together with the positioning of habitable room windows and the potential use of raised decking, would give rise to actual and perceived overlooking and an increased sense of intrusion between occupiers. Although details of boundary treatment have not been provided and could potentially be secured by condition, the constrained layout of the development demonstrates that adequate separation and privacy have not been satisfactorily achieved.

Furthermore, the various shortcomings identified are not isolated concerns but arise from the constrained nature of the site and the limited space available to accommodate the proposed dwelling alongside parking, access and outdoor amenity space. As a result, future occupiers would experience a combination of reduced privacy, limited outlook, increased exposure to noise and disturbance, and restricted access to functional outdoor space. The cumulative impact of these factors would result in a poor-quality living environment that falls below the standard expected for new residential development.

Overall, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal would provide acceptable living conditions for existing or future occupiers. The development would therefore be contrary to Policies CC8, EN16 and H10 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019), which seek to ensure development protects residential amenity, avoids unacceptable impacts resulting from noise and disturbance, and provides functional and usable private outdoor amenity space.

Amenities of neighbouring properties

Given the single-storey nature of the proposed bungalow and its corner plot position, the development would maintain meaningful separation distances from neighbouring residential properties. As such, it is not considered that the proposal would result in materially harmful to these properties.

Ecology and biodiversity

.Policy EN12 seeks to ensure that development protects biodiversity interests and secures biodiversity enhancements wherever possible. In addition, qualifying development is required to demonstrate a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Policy CC3.1(d) of the NPPF 2026 requires development proposals to include green infrastructure, whilst Policy DP3.2(c) requires proposals to incorporate and connect to a network of high-quality green infrastructure that strengthens habitats and biodiversity.

The application site comprises an existing dwelling and detached garage within a residential plot containing habitats that have the potential to support foraging and commuting bats. The site is also located adjacent to a Green Link and in close proximity to Prospect Park Local Wildlife Site. The proposals involve the demolition of the existing garage and alterations to the site that may affect habitats and ecological features.

Insufficient ecological information has been submitted to enable a full assessment of the proposal's impacts on protected species. Given the age and construction of the existing buildings, together with the presence of suitable surrounding habitat, there is potential for the buildings to support roosting bats. No bat survey has been provided and, as such, it has not been demonstrated whether bats are present or whether the proposed development could adversely affect a protected species. In the absence of this information, it is not possible to determine whether the proposal would comply with relevant wildlife legislation or the requirements of Policy EN12.

Furthermore, insufficient information has been submitted in respect of Biodiversity Net Gain. Whilst the applicant has stated that the development is exempt from mandatory BNG requirements, no evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the de minimis exemption applies. Given the extent of habitat likely to be affected by the development, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal is exempt and no BNG assessment or metric calculation has been submitted. Consequently, it has not been demonstrated that the development would deliver the required biodiversity net gain or avoid a net loss of biodiversity.

Policy N2.1(a) of the NPPF 2026 requires development proposals to protect and enhance biodiversity, whilst Policies N2.2 and N2.3 require development to avoid significant harm to biodiversity and demonstrate that adequate mitigation and compensation measures have been secured where impacts cannot be avoided. In the absence of sufficient ecological information, the Council cannot be satisfied that protected species would be safeguarded, that biodiversity interests would be appropriately protected or enhanced, or that the development would achieve the biodiversity outcomes sought by national and local policy.

Accordingly, the proposal is contrary to Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and Policies CC3.1(d), DP3.2(c), N2.1(a), N2.2 and N2.3 of the NPPF 2026

Highways and Access

Policy TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan requires development to provide safe and suitable access for all users and to ensure that the transport impacts of development do not result in unacceptable highway safety impacts. Policy TR5 requires development to make appropriate provision for parking, cycling and electric vehicle charging facilities in accordance with the Council's adopted standards.

The site is located within Zone 3 (Secondary Core Area) as identified within the Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD. The proposed subdivision of the existing dwelling would generate a parking requirement that can be accommodated on the site and the principle of utilising the existing access to serve the proposed one-bedroom dwelling is considered acceptable.

However, a new vehicular access is proposed to serve the retained dwelling and concerns remain regarding the visibility available to vehicles entering and leaving the site. Whilst the submitted Technical Note seeks to justify visibility splays of 2.4m x 19m, the submitted plans demonstrate that the required visibility envelope would be obstructed by boundary treatments, thereby compromising intervisibility between drivers and other highway users. The submitted information therefore fails to demonstrate that vehicles would be able to enter and leave the site with adequate visibility of pedestrians, cyclists and other users of the highway network.

Policy TR2.3 of the NPPF 2026 requires parking and access arrangements to take account of the connectivity of development and opportunities for sustainable travel. Whilst the site occupies an accessible urban location and benefits from access to sustainable modes of transport, the Council's concerns do not principally relate to the sustainability of the location or the amount of parking proposed. Rather, they relate to whether the development can provide a safe and suitable means of access. Regardless of a site's accessibility credentials, development proposals must still demonstrate that safe access arrangements can be achieved for all users.

It is acknowledged that further information relating to cycle parking, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and refuse storage has not been provided. These matters could potentially be addressed through planning conditions. However, the issue relating to the safe operation of the proposed access is fundamental to the acceptability of the scheme and remains unresolved. Policy TR4 of the NPPF 2026 requires development to provide safe and suitable access for all users. In this instance, insufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the proposed access arrangements would operate safely or that adequate visibility can be achieved. If there were no overriding reasons for refusal, the Council would have sought further details to establish whether this issue could be satisfactorily resolved.

Consequently, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal would provide a safe and suitable means of access or avoid unacceptable impacts on highway safety. The proposal therefore conflicts with Policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and Policies TR2 and TR4 of the NPPF 2026.

Trees and Landscaping

Policy EN14 seeks to protect existing trees and ensure that development does not adversely affect trees that contribute to the character and environmental quality of an area. Similarly, Policy DP3.2(c) of the NPPF 2026 requires development to incorporate and connect to high quality green infrastructure, including maintaining and enhancing tree cover, whilst Policy N2.1(d) requires proposals to conserve and enhance existing natural features, such as trees and hedgerows, and utilise appropriate landscaping to integrate development into its surroundings. The site also lies in close proximity to a Green Link and Air Quality Management Area, where opportunities to strengthen green infrastructure are particularly important.

The proposed development would result in the removal of existing hardstanding and its replacement with areas of soft landscaping, which is welcomed in principle and has the potential to increase the amount of green space within the site. The proposed use of grasscrete for part of the parking provision would also assist in reducing the visual and environmental impacts of hard surfacing. However, insufficient information has been submitted to assess the impact of the proposals on nearby trees.

In particular, no tree survey, arboricultural impact assessment or tree constraints information has been provided. As a consequence, it is not possible to determine the extent of any Root Protection Areas (RPAs) associated with trees adjoining the site, nor whether the proposed removal of hard surfacing, introduction of soft landscaping, construction activities or any associated excavation works would adversely affect existing trees. Furthermore, whilst new landscaping and native hedging are proposed, no tree planting is included and insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate how the development would contribute to the enhancement of the site's green infrastructure.

Accordingly, in the absence of sufficient arboricultural information, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal would adequately safeguard existing trees, maintain and enhance tree cover, or avoid harm to their long-term retention and health. As such, the proposal conflicts with Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and Policies CC3.1(d), DP3.2(c), N2.1(d) and N3.1(b) of the NPPF 2026.

Affordable Housing

Policy H3 requires that for schemes of 1-4 dwellings a financial contribution to enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere within the Borough. In accordance with the adopted Affordable Housing SPD 2021 this equates to contribution equivalent to 5% of the GDV of the development.

Policy code L3.1 of the NPPF 2026 states that proposals should “make efficient use of land, taking into account the identified need for different types of housing and other development”

Policy code DM5.1 of the NPPF 2026 states that “Where development proposals accord with relevant up-to-date plan policies and national decision-making policies, they should be assumed to be viable.”

Policy code HO7.1 of the NPPF 2026 states that “substantial weight should be given to the benefits of providing homes which will contribute towards meeting the evidenced accommodation needs of the community, as identified through needs assessments prepared for the area of the local planning authority and other relevant evidence.”

Policy code HO8.1 of the NPPF 2026 states that “Development proposals should meet or exceed up-to-date development plan requirements for the proportion and mix of affordable housing tenures relevant to the location, including the minimum proportion of Social Rent. This should be provided on-site unless: a. Off-site delivery on an alternative nearby site would optimise the quality or quantity of affordable homes built; or b. A cash payment in lieu of on or off-site provision can be justified robustly, and the agreed approach contributes towards the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.”

The Council's affordable housing policies are clear in explaining the severe and persistent need to deliver affordable housing in the Borough and to assist the Council in meeting the requirements of the NPPF.

The provision of affordable housing is a major issue in the Borough. The Borough experiences high levels of affordable housing need as evidenced by paragraphs 11-14 of the Reading Local Housing Needs Assessment (Appendix G) indicating around 113 households in need annually. Reading residents face major issues relating to affordability as a result of high and increasing house prices compared to average local incomes and significant issues in the future supply of affordable housing to meet identified needs. These matters are detailed below to demonstrate that local circumstances justify significant weight being given to the delivery of affordable housing and conversely, substantial harm arises from the failure to secure its provision on the provision of mixed and balanced communities.

The Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 is now more than five years old. Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become “out of date” when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning

judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example. Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to affordable housing remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remain very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be 'out of date'. Whilst it is acknowledged that Policy H1 is out of date, Policy H3 is not considered to be out of date.

The approach taken by the Local Plan 2019 is that the need for affordable housing in Reading is so significant that there is a justification for seeking contributions to affordable housing from all sizes of residential development, from one dwelling upwards, and therefore forms part of adopted Policy H3. The only exceptions offered by Policy H3 are for one-for-one replacement dwellings and for residential conversions from houses to flats where there is no additional floor space created as part of the proposal (and therefore no additional planning harm/strain on affordability).

The NPPF requires Development Plans to set out the level and type of affordable housing provision required. National planning policy therefore requires local planning authorities to plan for the identified need for affordable housing in their areas.

There remains to be a dire need for affordable housing within the Borough, as evidenced by the Council's most recent Annual Monitoring Report (2024-2025 (January 2026), page 28 – (see Appendix H), the delivery of affordable housing within 2024-25 is extremely low (11 completions). This is set against the backdrop of high housing delivery, with 890 new dwelling delivered within 2024-25 (higher than the annual target of 689 homes per annum as per Policy H1).

Policy H1 was adopted, following significant justification and interrogation through the local plan making process. The housing figures contained within it, were adopted in conjunction with policy H3 (affordable housing). There is an inherent link between the provision of housing, and the provision of identified needed affordable housing, and creating mixed and balanced communities. The supporting text of policy H3 states:

(4.4.23) "The target set in the policy has been determined as the result of an assessment of the viability of development of sites of various sizes in the Borough in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF. This will be the expected level of affordable housing provision."

An up-to-date assessment of the need for Affordable Housing that exists in the Borough is within the supporting text for Policy H3 (para 4.4.21) of the Reading Borough Local Plan Submission Draft Partial Update May 2025 which states the following:

"The Reading Housing Needs Assessment (HNA, 2024) has once again emphasised the critical need for affordable housing within Reading as well as the remainder of Berkshire. The HNA identified a need for 406 additional affordable homes per year in Reading, which represents the majority of the overall housing required. The consequences of not providing much-needed affordable homes would be severe, and would include homelessness, households in temporary or unsuitable accommodation, overcrowding and younger people having to remain living with parents for increasing periods. Insufficient affordable housing will also act as an impediment to economic growth, as firms will face increasing problems with accommodation for their workforce. Meeting even a substantial proportion of the identified housing need presents significant challenges, and it is therefore critical that new residential development of all sizes makes whatever contribution it can".

Whilst the principle of an affordable housing contribution has been agreed by the applicant, the applicant did not submit any GDV valuations and as such an affordable housing contribution has not been agreed or secured. Given the identified need as discussed above this will form a reason for refusal. An informative will be included to state that this reason for refusal may be able to be overcome. The LPA will

work pro-actively with the applicant to secure affordable housing provision if these wished to be resolved prior to any appeal.

Sustainability Considerations

In accordance with Policies CC2, and H5 all development would be required to demonstrate how it is proposing to be constructed to address climate change. In this instance, the proposal is sought to be built to acceptable standards. As such, should the recommendation had been to approve, a condition would have been attached to secure post construction certification to demonstrate that an appropriate standard had been met in line with the appropriate acceptable standard.

Waste Considerations

The proposal includes bin storage allocated within the application site as shown on the proposed block plan Whilst this may be adequate for the amount of bin storage required, it adds to a cluttered appearance, and in combination with the bike shed, and location would not enhance the frontage or street scene.

CIL

The proposal would be a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liable development if approved. If the scheme had been acceptable an informative would have been attached to the decision notice to advise the applicant of their responsibilities in this respect.

Other matters

The submitted plans reference application 201769/HOU which permitted a single storey side extension following demolition of garage. This has not commenced and for the avoidance of doubt is not considered to be a justification for the proposals as appears to be indicated. It is considered there is stark contrast between that approved under 201769/HOU which was for an extension to the existing house, and the proposal for a new dwelling. The proposal would have a greater mass and bulk and would extend further to the side boundaries than the extension approved. In addition, the proposal would spread built form throughout the site, creating a more cramped appearance, with additional hardstanding. The approved side extension was smaller scale in nature whereas the proposed dwelling significantly intensifies the site. Furthermore, due to the limited size of the site the new dwelling results in an unneighbourly development with overlooking and privacy concern that were not a consideration with the side extension. A such even if the side extension was extant the proposal would still be considered unacceptable due to the reasons as already stated within the report.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

In determining this application, regard has been had to the provisions of the Development Plan and all other material considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2026.

The application site is located within an established residential area and therefore falls to be considered having regard to the NPPF's approach towards development proposals within settlements. Policy Code S4.1 of the NPPF 2026 states that development proposals within settlements should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects when assessed against the national decision-making policies within the Framework.

In terms of benefits, the proposal would provide one additional dwelling within the urban area and would make a limited contribution towards housing supply. There would also be limited economic benefits associated with the construction of the development and future expenditure by occupiers.

However, these benefits are substantially outweighed by the adverse impacts identified. The proposal would result in a cramped and overdeveloped form of development that would fail to respond positively to the character and appearance of the area. It would fail to provide an acceptable standard of amenity for both future and existing occupiers, including in relation to privacy, outlook, external amenity space and exposure to noise and disturbance. Furthermore, insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the proposal would not adversely affect biodiversity interests, nearby trees and green infrastructure. The proposal has also failed to demonstrate that the proposed access arrangements would operate safely and, in the absence of a completed legal agreement, would fail to secure an appropriate contribution towards affordable housing provision within the Borough.

Following on from the above, Policy S4.2 sets out that *“In applying policy S4, the circumstances in which the benefits of approving development are likely to be substantially outweighed by adverse effects include (but are not restricted to) situations where the development proposal would:*

- a. Have a substantial adverse impact in relation to: i. The allocation or safeguarding of land or buildings for particular uses in the development plan, unless there is no reasonable prospect of an application coming forward for the allocated use, or there is evidence that the safeguarding is no longer appropriate; or ii. The application of the policies in this Framework for existing recreational land and facilities (HC7), Local Green Space (HC8), areas of particular importance for biodiversity and geodiversity (N6), Protected Landscapes (N4) and development within residential curtilages (L2(1)(d)).*
- b. Involve the whole or partial loss of undeveloped land which is used for a cemetery or burial ground; or for water storage and/or flood risk management (unless suitable compensatory provision is made that does not increase the risk of flooding either on or off-site); or*
- c. Fail to comply with one of the national decision-making policies which state that development proposals should be refused in specific circumstances.”*

Given the concerns raised, the proposals would conflict with national design making policy DP3 (3) which sets out that permission should be refused in this case. Whilst the site within the settlement, which means there is a presumption to approve development, the Local Planning Authority considers that the design of the scheme would result in a poor standard of amenity for future occupiers of the development (in conflict with National decision-making policy DP3), and is a substantial adverse effect of the scheme that would outweigh the benefits of the scheme. When combined with the other harms identified, it is considered that the collectively these adverse effects would sustainably outweigh the limited benefits arising from the scheme

Taking these matters together, it is considered that the adverse effects of the proposal would substantially outweigh the limited benefits arising from the provision of a single dwelling. The development therefore conflicts with the relevant policies of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and is not supported by the objectives of the NPPF 2026.

6. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above and in light of any other material planning applications, the proposal is considered not to be in accordance with the development plan. Accordingly, recommendation is made to refuse planning permission.