

## Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation

### Screening Template

Proposed Development Background	
Site Address	St Leonards Church Hall Glebe Way Chesham Bois Buckinghamshire HP6 5ND
Proposal	Redevelopment of the site to create a new multifunctional Parish Centre with cafe, day nursery building, replacement rectory with detached garage, 2 outbuildings to provide prayer room and substation/bin and bicycle store, associated parking and landscaping.
Application Number	PL/22/4074/FA

Application Type	<b>Y</b>	Full planning permission
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<p>Planning applications within Zone of Influence of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC).</p> <p>Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Reg 63) and Conservation of Habitats and Species (EU exit amendment) Regulations 2019.</p>
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Step 1 Screening for likely Significant Effect on CB SAC	
Risk Assessment	Delete as appropriate
Is the development directly connected with or necessary to the management of that SAC site?	No
Is the development located within the 500m exclusion zones <sup>1</sup> ?	No

<sup>1</sup> The SAC evidence dated 2022 sets out what development is likely to have significant effects on the integrity of the conservation objectives of the CBSAC. Proposals which represent a net increase in homes within this zone will lead to an increase in local population and a likely increase in recreational disturbance within the SAC. As the likely significance effect cannot be ruled out at this stage an Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken. It concluded that any net new homes within 500 metres of the boundary CBSAC should be avoided as it would not be possible to mitigate the impacts from the recreational disturbance. The result being that the Council would be required to refuse this planning application. Natural England (NE), the Government's conservation advisor, support the findings in the Habitats Regulations Assessment.

	Delete as appropriate	
Risk Assessment		
Is the development located within a Zone of Influence?	Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI/SAC (between 500m - 12.6km)?	Yes
	Tring Woodlands SSSI/SAC (between 500m - 1.7km)?	No
Could the Qualifying Features of the European Site be affected by the Proposal?	No	The scheme is for residential development <sup>2</sup>
	Yes	The scheme is for non-residential development <sup>3</sup>
	Yes (but no net gain in dwellings)	The scheme is for mixed residential and non-residential development
Has applicant provided information in support of application?	Yes	<p>Please detail any key information here or titles/dates/versions of documents provided in support of the application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Planning statement, November 2022</li> <li>b) Design and Access statement, October 2022</li> <li>c) Vision and use statement, November 2022</li> <li>d) Statement of community involvement, January 2020</li> <li>e) Transport statement prepared by Waterman Infrastructure &amp; Environment Ltd, November 2022</li> <li>f) Heritage Assessment prepared by Cotswold Archaeology, October 2022</li> <li>g) Landscape and visual assessment prepared by Adams Habermehl Landscape Architects, October 2022</li> <li>h) Noise impact assessment prepared by RF Environmental, December 2019</li> <li>i) Energy statement prepared by NRG Consulting, November 2022</li> <li>j) Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Arboricultural report prepared by Sylva Consultancy, September 2022</li> <li>k) Flood risk and drainage strategy, and SuDS Maintenance guide prepared by Infrastruct CS Ltd, December 2022.</li> <li>l) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment, prepared by Arbtech, November 2022</li> <li>m) Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Metric, prepared by Arbtech, February 2023</li> <li>n) Bat Mitigation Plan, prepared by Arbtech, April 2023</li> <li>o) Great Crested Newt eDNA Survey, prepared by Arbtech, July 2023</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Where there is a net increase including: Student accommodation (C2), residential care homes and institutions (C2), dwelling houses (C3), Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) (C4), residential caravan sites, permanent residential boat moorings, gypsies, travellers and travelling show people plots, ancillary accommodation unless this is tied to the main dwelling (e.g. granny annexes). Also, see Table 1 of the 'Development Management HRA Guidance Note'.

<sup>3</sup> Some applications depending on their scale and location could lead to a significant impact on the SAC. Each case will need to be considered on its own merits. Also, see Table 1 of the 'Development Management HRA Guidance Note'.

		p) Badger Survey, prepared by Arbtech, August 2023
If advice has been sought from any key bodies, please delete as appropriate	Yes	Natural England
	Yes	Buckinghamshire Council Ecology Team
	<p>Summary of advice received:</p> <p><b>Buckinghamshire Council Ecology Team:</b>  “The application site is located within the 12.6km Zone of Influence (ZOI) of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (the Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is component of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC). The ZOI identifies the area which net increase in residential development would be expected to result in increased recreational pressure and impact on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC. There is a presumption against any net increase in residential development within the 12.6km ZOI and 500m avoidance zone. It is understood from the proposal that there will be no net increase of residential units. If there is please consult Natural England on this application.”</p> <p><b>Natural England:</b>  “The 12.6km zone proposed within the evidence base carried out by Footprint Ecology represents the core area around Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI where increases in the number of residential properties will require a Habitats Regulations Assessment. Mitigation measures will be necessary to rule out adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC from the cumulative impacts of development.</p> <p>However, the proposed development <u>does not</u> result in a net increase in residential dwellings and therefore is unlikely to result in increased recreational pressure upon the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.”</p> <p>“Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not damage or destroy the interest features for which the site has been notified and has no objection.”</p> <p>“Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutory designated sites and has no objection.”</p>	
Conclusion of Screening	<p>Officers conclude that there would not be a Likely Significant Effects ‘alone’ and/or ‘in-combination’ on features associated with the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation. Therefore they consider that an Appropriate Assessment of the proposal is not necessary.</p> <p>However, Members of the Planning Committee held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022 voted to defer the application for the following reason:</p> <p>“To allow officers to consider further the implications of the proposed development on the integrity of the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The site lies within the Zone of Influence of the SAC and Members disagreed with Officers’ screening of the proposal that no</p>	

likely significant effects would occur. They requested deferral of this planning application, subject to receipt of a satisfactory Appropriate Assessment for the site, considering potential usage against some different scenarios.”

Based on the outcome of the Planning Committee, the likely significant effects on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC cannot be ruled out (alone or in-combination with other plans or projects) in terms of recreational pressure.

Therefore an Appropriate Assessment of the proposal is necessary.