



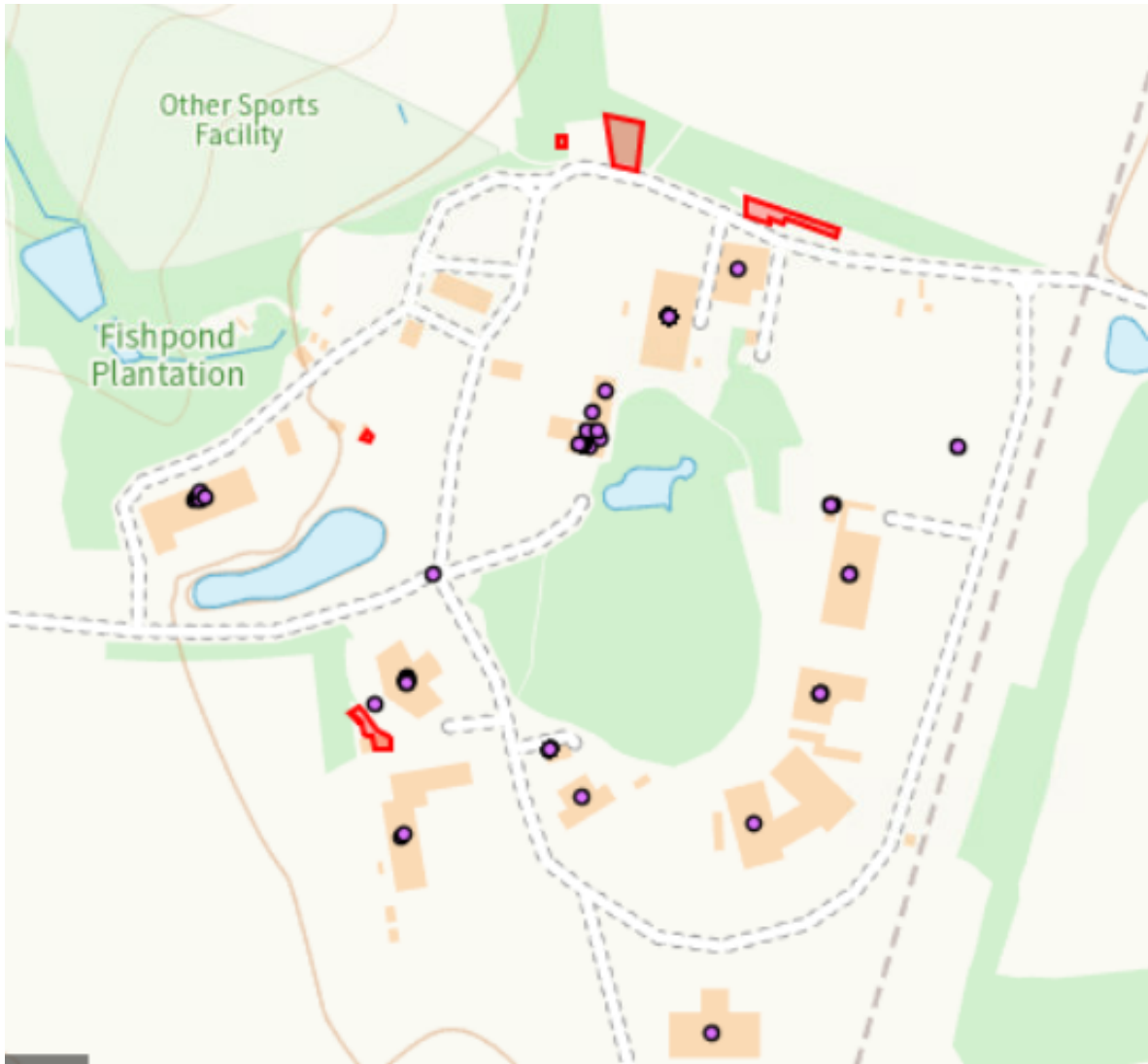
ITEM NUMBER: 9

PLANNING COMMITTEE 17 December 2025
DATE:

REFERENCE NUMBER: UTT/25/2525/FUL

LOCATION: Green Energy Hub
Chesterford Park
Little Chesterford
Essex

SITE LOCATION PLAN:



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Organisation: Uttlesford District Council Date: 19 November 2025

PROPOSAL: Proposed installation of bin store, together with related landscaping, tree planting and associated development. Section 73A retrospective application for a new fibre building, and GRP equipment enclosures.

APPLICANT: Nick Staddon

AGENT: Matt Brewer

EXPIRY DATE: 19 November 2025

EOT EXPIRY DATE: 19 December 2025

CASE OFFICER: Miss Katherine Jennings

NOTATION: Within Development Limits
Important Woodlands – Bassingbourne Wood

REASON THIS APPLICATION IS ON THE AGENDA: The Council has a part ownership of the site

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The applicant seeks planning permission for the installation of a bin store, landscaping and associated development. The applicant also seeks retrospective planning permission for a new fibre building and 'glass reinforced plastic' (GRP) equipment enclosures.

1.2 The proposal is appropriate with respect to its principle and design and appearance. The proposal would not result in detrimental harm to the amenities enjoyed by residential dwellings, to access and parking or to ecology.

1.3 The proposal has been assessed against the relevant policies contained within the Development Plan, relevant legislation and the National Planning Policy Framework. The Officer concludes that the proposal complies and is in accordance with these policies and guidance. As such, the proposal is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to **GRANT** permission for the development subject to those items set out in section 17 of this report –

A) Conditions

3. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION:

3.1 The application sites are located within Chesterford Research Park, which lies to the east of Little Chesterford. The site comprises of a range of buildings for research and development purposes, as well as associated ancillary buildings and infrastructure. The application sites are split into four parcels of land.

3.2 The Chesterford Research Park is located within the countryside, with few residential dwellings in the vicinity. Bassingbourne Wood is located to the north of the Research Park.

4. PROPOSAL

4.1 The proposal is for the proposed installation of a bin store, with associated landscaping and development relating to the proposal as a whole. A new fibre building and GRP equipment enclosures have already been fully or partially constructed on the site, and retrospective permission is sought for these.

4.2 The site is split into four parcels and can be summarised as follows:

Area	Proposed Development	Started / Completed Development
1 – the Nucleus	Bin store	Fibre Building
2 – Central Utilities Area	N/A	GRP Enclosure
3 – North Carpark	Landscaping and tree works	GRP Enclosure
4	Landscaping and tree works	N/A

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The development does not constitute 'EIA development' for the purposes of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

6. RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

Reference	Proposal	Decision
UTT/21/2846/FUL	The construction of a Green Energy Hub for the Chesterford Research Park comprising solar array	Approved (2022)

	development, a battery energy storage system, associated transformers, underground cabling and other electrical equipment, related landscaping scheme, fencing and CCTV.	
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7. PREAPPLICATION ADVICE AND/OR COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

- 7.1** No pre-application discussions were undertaken between the Applicant and the Council prior to the submission of the application.

8. SUMMARY OF STATUTORY CONSULTEE RESPONSES

- 8.1** There was no requirement to consult any statutory consultees as part of the assessment of this proposal.

9. PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

- 9.1** At the time of writing this report, no comments were received from the Little Chesterford Parish Council.

10. CONSULTEE RESPONSES

10.1 Woodlands Trust

- 10.1.1** At the time of writing this report, no comments were received from the Woodlands Trust.

10.2 UDC Environmental Health

- 10.2.1** The Environmental Health Officer reported that they did not anticipate any significant environmental health or public health impacts associated with the proposed development, as the size, scale and location of the proposal means that any noise impact is likely to be minimal.

10.3 UDC Landscape Officer

- 10.3.1** The Landscape Officer reported that while the felling of trees (as proposed) should generally be avoided, the impacts are limited and acceptable. The Landscape Officer highlighted the positive outcome from the Design and Access Statement that replacement trees will be planted.

10.4 Place Services (Ecology)

The Ecology Officer reported no ecological objection to the proposal, subject to conditions relating to ecological enhancements and mitigations, and wildlife sensitive light schemes. Due to the application being part

retrospective, the Ecology Officer stated that it is up the Local Planning Authority to decide which areas are relevant for Biodiversity Net Gain.

11. REPRESENTATIONS

- 11.1** Two site notices were displayed on site and 68 notifications letters were sent to nearby properties, including one set of re-consultations following the establishment that the proposal is part-retrospective. At the time of writing this report, no representations have been received.

12. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 12.1** In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, this decision has been taken having regard to the policies and proposals in the National Planning Policy Framework, The Development Plan and all other material considerations identified in the “Considerations and Assessments” section of the report. The determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 12.2** Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in dealing with a planning application, to have regard to

- a) The provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application:
 - (aza) a post-examination draft neighbourhood development plan, so far as material to the application,
- b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and
- c) any other material considerations.

- 12.3** Section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that planning permission on an application made to a local planning authority may be granted with planning permission for development carried out before the date of the application.

12.4 The Development Plan

- 12.4.1** Essex Minerals Local Plan (adopted July 2014)
Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (adopted July 2017)
Uttlesford District Local Plan (adopted 2005)
Uttlesford Design Code (adopted July 2024)
Felsted Neighbourhood Plan (made February 2020)
Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan (made December 2016)
Newport and Quendon and Rickling Neighbourhood Plan (made June 2021)
Thaxted Neighbourhood Plan (made February 2019)
Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan (made July 2022)
Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan (made October 2022)

Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan (made December 2022)
Great & Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan (made February 2023)

13. POLICY

13.1 National Policies

13.1.1 National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

13.2 Uttlesford District Local Plan 2005

13.2.1	S5	Chesterford Park Boundary
	GEN1	Access
	GEN2	Design
	GEN4	Good Neighbourliness
	GEN7	Nature Conservation
	GEN8	Vehicle Parking Standards
	ENV3	Open Space and Trees
	ENV8	Other Landscape Elements of Importance for Nature Conservation
	ENV11	Noise Generators

13.3 Great & Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan (made February 2023)

13.3.1	GLCNP/1	Overall Spatial Strategy
	GLCNP/8	Employment

13.4 Supplementary Planning Document or Guidance

Essex Design Guide
Uttlesford District-Wide Design Code (2024)
Uttlesford Interim Climate Change Policy (2021)
Essex County Council Parking Standards (2009)
Essex County Council Parking Guidance – Part 1: Parking Standards (2024)

14. CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

14.1 The issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- 14.2**
- A) Principle of development (S5, GLCNP/1, GLCNP/8, Uttlesford Interim Climate Change Policy and the NPPF)**
 - B) Design and Character (GEN2, ENV3, Uttlesford District Wide Design Code and the NPPF)**
 - C) Residential Amenities (GEN2, GEN4, ENV11 and the NPPF)**
 - D) Access and Parking (GEN1, GEN8, Parking Standards and the NPPF)**
 - E) Ecology (GEN7, ENV8 and the NPPF)**

14.3 A) Principle of development (S5, GLCNP/1, GLCNP/8, Uttlesford Interim Climate Change Policy and the NPPF)

14.3.1 Policy S5 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) states that facilities for research and development will be permitted within these boundaries if they are in accordance with this Plan. Policies GLCNP/1 and GLCNP/8 both support this policy.

14.3.2 While the proposed development does not directly relate to employment, it does facilitate the development and research of the Research Park through upgrades to utilities and green energy infrastructure. This proposal to improve green energy infrastructure is also in line with the aims of the Uttlesford Interim Climate Change Policy, which aims to ensure that development contributes to climate change mitigation.

14.3.3 As such, the principle of development for this proposal is acceptable and complies with Policy S5 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005), Policies GLCNP/1 and GLCNP/8 Great & Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan (2023), the Uttlesford Interim Climate Change Policy (2021) and the NPPF.

14.4 B) Design and Character (GEN2, ENV3, Uttlesford District Wide Design Code and the NPPF)

14.4.1 In terms of design policy, good design is central to the objectives of both National and Local planning policies. The NPPF requires policies to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for the wider area and development schemes. These criteria are reflected in policy GEN2 of the adopted Local Plan which also requires that development is compatible with the scale, form, layout, appearance and materials of surrounding buildings. Policy ENV3 states that the loss of features such as certain trees through development proposals will not be permitted unless the need for the development outweighs their amenity value.

14.4.2 The size and scale of the proposals are appropriate, with the GRP enclosures and fibre buildings being a single storey and small in footprint, relative to other development on the site. Their appearance and materials are typical for those expected for the buildings, enclosures and structures.

14.4.3 The Landscaping Officer had no objections to the works relating to trees and landscaping, given the proposal for replacement trees on the site. This will ensure that the amenity value of the trees is preserved.

14.4.4 As such, the character and appearance of the proposal would be appropriate and the proposals relating to the trees would be acceptable. Therefore, the proposal is acceptable and complies with policies GEN2 and ENV3 of the Local Plan (2005) and the NPPF.

14.5 C) Residential Amenities (GEN2, GEN4, ENV11 and the NPPF)

- 14.5.1** Policies GEN2 and GEN4 of the adopted Local Plan state that development will not be permitted unless its design meets a variety of given criteria, including that it minimises the environmental impact on and enjoyment of neighbouring properties. Policy ENV11 of the adopted Local Plan also emphasises that noise generators should not affect residential properties.
- 14.5.2** The closest residential dwellings are located far enough away from the development that there would be no impact on residential amenities as outlined above, due to the size, scale and nature of the development. The Environmental Health Officer confirmed that the development would be unlikely to cause issues in terms of the impact of noise for residential dwellings.
- 14.5.3** Therefore, the proposal complies with policies GEN2, GEN4 and ENV11 of the Local Plan (2005) and the NPPF.
- 14.6 D) Access and Parking (GEN1, GEN8, Parking Standards and the NPPF)**
- 14.6.1** Policy GEN8 of the Local Plan and the Essex Parking Guidance documents state that development will not be permitted unless the number, design and layout of vehicle parking places proposed is appropriate for the location. Policy GEN1 of the Local Plan ensures that accesses to developments are suitable to a range of transport needs and can safely ensure access to and from the development.
- 14.6.2** Given the nature and location of the proposals, they would not cause issues in terms of access and parking. The development close to car parking areas are built adjacent to these areas and have not affecting the parking provision. Therefore, the proposal complies with Policies GEN1 and GEN8 on the Uttlesford Local Plan (2025), the Essex County Council Parking Standards (2009), and the Parking Guidance – Part 1: Parking Standards Design and Good Practice (September 2024) and the NPPF.
- 14.7 E) Ecology (GEN7, ENV8 and the NPPF)**
- 14.7.1** Place Services Ecology, following review of the submitted information, raised no objections subject to conditions to secure ecological mitigation and enhancement measures. Two responses were provided by Place Services Ecology, to clarify advice on the part-retrospective nature of the application. The development would comply with paragraphs 44, 187(d) and 193(a) of the NPPF, and policies GEN7 and ENV8 of the Local Plan. The conditions refer to action in accordance with the appraisal recommendations, a biodiversity enhancement strategy, and a wildlife-sensitive lighting scheme. This provides certainty for the council of the likely impacts on designated sites, protected, priority and threatened species and habitats with appropriate mitigation measures secured.

14.7.2 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

BNG is a statutory requirement set out in Schedule 7A (Biodiversity Gain in England) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A (Biodiversity Gain in England) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that the development may not be begun unless (a) a biodiversity gain plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and (b) the LPA has approved the plan.

14.7.3 It has been established during the course of the application that the proposal is part-retrospective. The part-retrospective nature of the application is confirmed by Place Services Ecology, who state that they are satisfied that sufficient information has been provided at application stage but that it is for the LPA to decide which areas are relevant for BNG. The application comprises of four separate parcels of land, with three of the areas proposed to have built development on it and one reserved for ecological enhancement measures and BNG. Only the part of the proposal relating to the new development will be subject to BNG.

14.7.4 The consultee highlighted that a Biodiversity Gain Plan should be submitted prior to commencement of the development (post-decision) and provided comments about the proposals for post-intervention values, stating that an HMMP should be secured for all significant on-site enhancements. Based on the submitted post-intervention values, it is suggested that this includes the following habitats: native hedgerow, other woodland, mixed scrub and rural trees. While the post-intervention values are realistic and deliverable, it is recommended by the consultee that the applicant carefully consider the blue line areas and their role in post-intervention values.

15. ADDITIONAL DUTIES

15.1 Public Sector Equalities Duties

15.1.1 The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics, namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or beliefs and sex and sexual orientation. It places the Council under a legal duty to have due regard to the advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers including planning powers.

15.1.2 The Committee must be mindful of this duty inter alia when determining all planning applications. In particular, the Committee must pay due regard to the need to: (1) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; (2) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and (3) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 15.1.3** Due consideration has been made to The Equality Act 2010 during the assessment of the planning application, no conflicts are raised.

15.2 Human Rights

- 15.2.1** There may be implications under Article 1 (protection of property) and Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) of the First Protocol regarding the right of respect for a person's private and family life and home, and to the peaceful enjoyment of possessions; however, these issues have been taken into account in the determination of this application.

16. CONCLUSION

- 16.1** In light of the above assessment, the character and appearance of the proposal would be appropriate. There would be no detrimental harm to residential amenities, access and parking or ecology as a result of the proposal.

- 16.2** The proposal complies with the policies of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005), Supplementary Planning Documents, Parking Standards, the Great and Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan (2023) and the National Planning Policy Framework. As such, it is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

17. CONDITIONS

- 1** The new development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this decision.

REASON: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2** The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans as set out in the Schedule.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt as to the nature of the development hereby permitted, to ensure development is carried out in accordance with the approved application details, to ensure that the development is carried out with the minimum harm to the local environment, in accordance with the Policies of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005) as shown in the Schedule of Policies

- 3** Prior to commencement of the non-retrospective part of the development hereby approved, a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) for significant on-site enhancements, prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Net Gain plan, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The HMMP should include:

- a) a non-technical summary;
- b) the roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the HMMP;
- c) the planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the on-site significant enhancements in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan;
- d) the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of development;
- e) the monitoring methodology in respect of the created or enhanced habitat to be submitted to the local planning authority; and
- f) details of the content of monitoring reports to be submitted to the LPA including details of adaptive management which will be undertaken to ensure the aims and objectives of the Biodiversity Gain Plan are achieved.

Notice in writing shall be given to the local planning authority when the:

- initial enhancements, as set in the HMMP, have been implemented; and
- habitat creation and enhancement works, as set out in the HMMP, have been completed after 30 years.

The created and/or enhanced habitat specified in the approved HMMP shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved HMMP.

Monitoring reports shall be submitted in years 1, 2, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 to the local planning authority, in accordance with the methodology specified in the approved HMMP.

REASON: To allow the development to demonstrate mandatory biodiversity net gain and allow the local planning authority to discharge its duties under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

- 4** Prior to first use of the lighting, a lighting design scheme for biodiversity in accordance with General Note: 08/23 (Institute of Lighting Professionals) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The scheme shall:

- a) identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their breeding sites and resting places or along important routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging; and
- b) show how and where external lighting will be installed (through provision of appropriate lighting plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent

the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places.

Thereafter, all external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the approved scheme and shall be maintained in accordance with the scheme at all times.

REASON: To conserve and enhance protected and priority species and habitats and allow the local planning authority to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (priority habitats & species), section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, in accordance with the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan Policies GEN7, ENV8, and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

- 5** Within three (3) months from the grant of this permission, a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for protected, priority and threatened species shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall include:
- a) purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;
 - b) detailed designs or product descriptions to achieve stated objectives;
 - c) locations of the enhancement measures by appropriate drawings;
 - d) persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures;
 - e) details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance (where relevant).
- Thereafter, the ecological works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy within three (3) months from the full discharge of this condition.

REASON: To conserve and enhance protected and priority species and habitats and allow the local planning authority to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (priority habitats & species), section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, in accordance with the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan Policies GEN7, ENV8, and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

- 6** All ecological mitigation and enhancement measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report (Greengage, September 2025). This may include the appointment of an appropriately competent person e.g. an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) to provide on-site ecological expertise during construction. Thereafter, the appointed person shall undertake all activities, and works shall be carried out, in accordance with the approved details. The enhancement measures and/or works shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details and shall be maintained as such at all times.

REASON: To conserve and enhance protected and priority species and habitats and allow the local planning authority to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (priority habitats & species) as updated by the Environment Act 2021, section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, in accordance with the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan Policies GEN7 and ENV8, and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).