

Appendix 2.1 – Policy SS11: Arborfield Green Strategic Development Location

1. The area identified as Arborfield Green Strategic Development Location (SDL), as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated for a sustainable, well designed, mixed-use development.
2. The development will be delivered in accordance with the development, place shaping and delivery principles set out below.

Development principles

3. Phased delivery of
 - a) Around 3,047 dwellings comprising:
 - i. 2,137 dwellings through completions, extant planning permissions, resolutions to grant planning permission;
 - ii. 300 dwellings by optimising development density at land currently occupied by Arborfield Studios;
 - iii. 600 dwellings on land to the north of Arborfield Studios, known as Barkham Square; and
 - iv. 10 dwellings at Westwood Yard, Sheerlands Road.and including:
 - i. 40% affordable homes in accordance with Policy H3;
 - ii. 25 self and custom build service plots;
 - iii. 5 Gypsy and Traveller pitches⁵; and
 - iv. Specialist accommodation, including accommodation for older persons.
 - b) Around 6,000m² of employment floorspace.
 - c) One 2-form entry primary school (including appropriate onsite early years provision) with potential to expand to 3-form entry in the future. The school should include space for the integrated teaching of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.
 - d) A district centre providing a range of services and facilities in a location central to the planned housing, to include retail, leisure, employment, cultural, and health uses.
 - e) Two local centres providing day to day retail and other local community uses.

⁵ Requirement only applies to the area without planning permission at September 2024, optimisation of Arborfield Studios, Barkham Square and Westward Yard, Sheerlands Road.

- f) A solution to avoid and mitigate the impact of development upon the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area through provision of sufficient Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) (subject to monitoring of the quality and quantity standards).

Place shaping principles

- 4. The siting, layout, form, design and landscaping should:
 - a) Protect and retain the physical, visual and perceived separation of the defined settlements of Arborfield Cross, Barkham Hill and Finchampstead North;
 - b) Achieve climate resilient neighbourhoods through the application of adaptation and mitigation methods, including embedding passive design principles and energy demand reduction measures in the sustainable design and construction of buildings and homes;
 - c) Incorporate measures to conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings, through appropriate design and the provision of sufficient space; and
 - d) Locate new buildings outside areas of flood risk, with development planned for sequentially, by placing the most vulnerable development in the lowest areas of flood risk.
 - e) Draw on the recreational and ecological opportunities of watercourses.

Delivery principles

- 5. The delivery of the SDL must be supported by a comprehensive masterplan and package of infrastructure to support a thriving and healthy community, including the following:

Masterplanning

- 6. To ensure that development comes forward in a strategic, coordinated and comprehensive manner, delivery should be led by a masterplan that demonstrates how the principles established in this policy, supporting guidance in Appendix A, the Arborfield Garrison SDL SPD and permitted development have been considered to ensure high quality development with a distinctive character. The masterplan must provide:
 - a) A coordinated and comprehensive approach to development, which demonstrates how the proposed development will integrate with the planned and permitted development within the SDL;
 - b) A strategy for the quantum and distribution of land uses, access points, design and layout principles (including a design code), which draws on a detailed understanding of the area's characteristics, opportunities and constraints; and
 - c) A strategy for the timely delivery of facilities and infrastructure necessary to support the delivery of the SDL.

Drainage and flood alleviation

7. Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive drainage and flood alleviation strategy that:
 - a) Provides high quality sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) that are integrated into the wider landscape and green and blue infrastructure strategy, including mitigation at source and makes a positive contribution to attractive open spaces, and improvements to biodiversity and water quality; and
 - b) Establishes clear and robust arrangements for future maintenance.

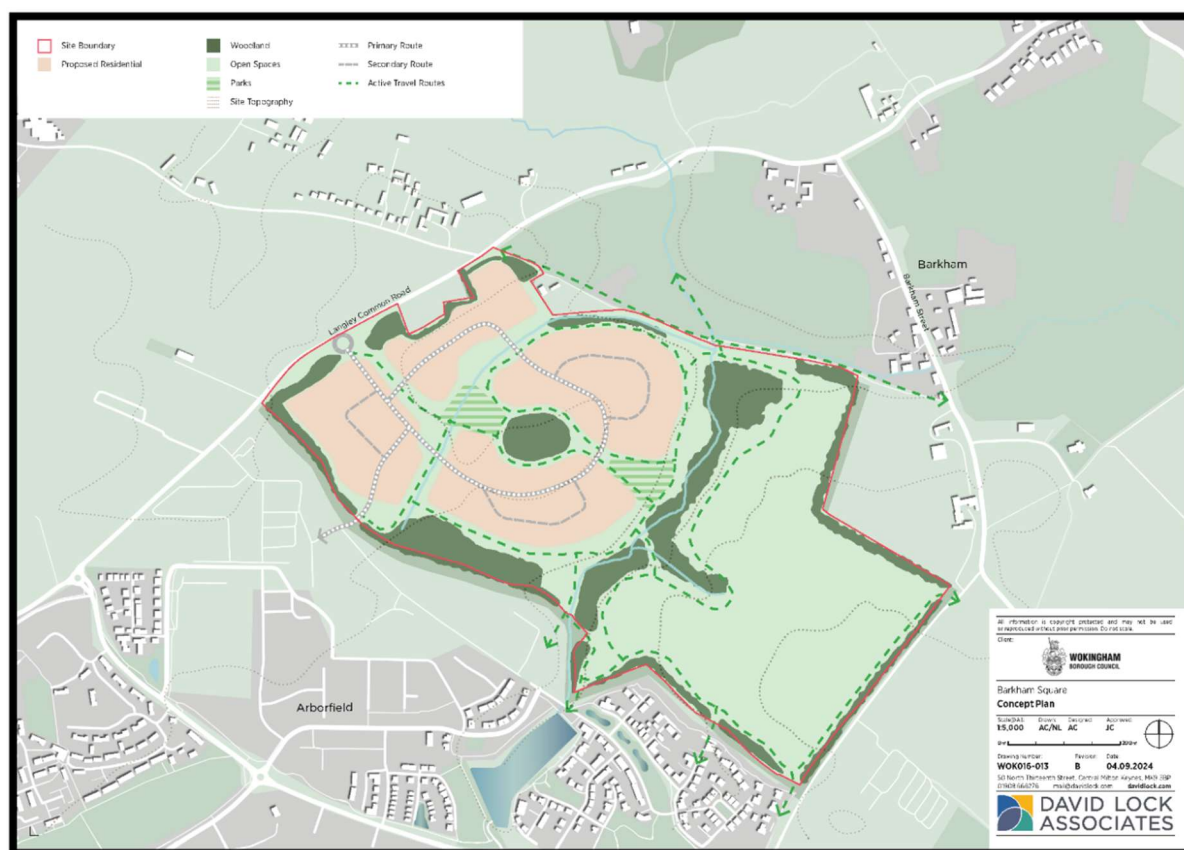
Biodiversity

8. Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive ecological strategy that:
 - a) Achieves a measurable biodiversity net gain of at least 10% as calculated using the latest statutory metric; and
 - b) Provide measures to avoid and mitigate the impact of development on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. This will include the provision of sufficient and accessible Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace within the SDL (as set out in Policy NE3).

Transport

9. Development proposals should devise and implement a sustainable transport and movement strategy that has been informed by a detailed Transport Assessment and provides:
 - a) Improvements to the quality and frequency of public transport services, such as corridor routes to Bracknell, Reading, Winnersh and Wokingham;
 - b) New and improved connections for cyclists and pedestrian both through and beyond the SDL to communities, facilities, services and local employment opportunities, including those in the Arborfield SDL, Finchampstead North and Crowthorne. Connections should be safe, suitable and convenient;
 - c) Prioritisation of cycle and pedestrian movements through the SDL to maximise connectivity and accessibility to the district centre and planned education provision;
 - d) Prioritisation of pedestrian movements to maximise connectivity to SANG, including Hazebrouck Meadows;
 - e) Highway improvements along the Barkham Road, the A327 (to both the M3 and Reading) and routes towards Bracknell and Wokingham; and
 - f) Improvements to the management of general traffic, including the consideration of traffic calming measures.

Figure 6: Arborfield Green Strategic Development Location: Barkham Square concept plan.



5.97 The former Arborfield Garrison was originally identified in the Core Strategy local plan (2010) as a location for sustainable, well-designed mixed-use development for around 3,500 homes in the period to 2026.

5.98 A number of phases of the planned development have since been completed, including around 1,000 new homes by end of March 2023. Key parts of the supporting infrastructure have also been completed including a secondary school (Bohunt School), the first of two planned primary schools (Farley Hill Primary School) and the Arborfield Cross Relief Road (Observer Way) and Nine Mile Road Extension. Planning permission has been granted for the new district centre incorporating retail and leisure uses.

5.99 In reviewing the original vision, additional development opportunities has been identified. This is largely through the intensification of the currently undelivered parcels in the northern part of the SDL (estimated to be an additional 300 dwellings over and above the original vision) and the expansion of the SDL to include an adjoining area of land (estimated to be an additional 600 dwellings). In addition, a modest amendment is made to incorporate land at Westwood Yard, Sheerlands Road (10 net additional dwellings). The residential development at Hogwood Park, the former training ground of Reading Football Club is also now included within the SDL.

5.100 It will be necessary to ensure that further development within the Arborfield Green SDL improves opportunities for active travel to nearby centres and destinations in Wokingham town, both support the vitality and viability of the centre and to reduce overall private car trips in the surrounding area.

5.101 Further guidance to Policy SS11 is set out in Appendix A. This is supplementary to the original Arborfield Garrison SDL Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD sets out principles to

ensure high quality development with a distinctive character and will remain in its current form. Further guidance may be prepared in due course to ensure the additional development continues to reflect the key principles and concept.

5.102 A defined settlement area has been defined on the Policies Map which reflect areas where building is anticipated based on the concept plan. The council recognises that these areas are indicative and that masterplanning will establish where building will occur in more detail. The Policies Map will be updated in the future once there is greater certainty.



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**Wokingham Borough
Local Plan Update
2023 - 2040
Proposed Submission Plan**

Appendices



A

Arborfield Green SDL: Development Guidelines

A Arborfield Green SDL: Development Guidelines

A1. Arborfield Green Strategic Development Location (SDL)

- A1.1. The Core Strategy local plan (2010) identified the former Arborfield Garrison as a site for a sustainable, well-designed mixed-use development for around 3,500 dwellings, new employment, appropriate retail facilities and transport, social and physical infrastructure.
- A1.2. A number of phases of the development have been completed. The secondary school (Bohunt School) and one of two planned primary schools (Farley Hill Primary School) are open. The Nine Mile Ride Extension is open and runs through the development, linking with the A327 (Eversley Road). Other improvements include the completion of a new highway bridge at Barkham Bridge to accommodate two-way traffic flow.
- A1.3. As delivery of the SDL has progressed, a wide range of infrastructure projects have been delivered, or have been permitted, which alongside active travel and public transport connections to nearby settlements have helped to provide some self-sufficiency and containment.
- A1.4. In reviewing the original vision, additional development opportunities have been identified through optimising density at land currently occupied by Arborfield Studios in the northern part of the SDL, and through the extension of the SDL to include land to the north known as Barkham Square, and land to the south at Westwood Yard, Sheerlands Road.

Concept Rationale

- A1.5. The Arborfield Green SDL amounts to what will essentially be a large village. There are a range of important ingredients, in addition to those which have already been provided, to ensure a degree of self-sufficiency and the achievement of a vibrant, thriving and healthy community.
- A1.6. Consequently, the following elements are considered fundamental to its continued success:
- a) To achieve climate resilient neighbourhoods by championing the use of adaptation and mitigation methods at all scales in the sustainable design and construction of residential and non-residential development. This will include delivering energy efficient homes and buildings, as well as utilising opportunities for renewable energy generation.
 - b) To create a cohesive place with a singular identity, inspired by the landscape setting and existing features through careful planning of the built form, to provide an attractive environment. Existing woodland areas, hedges and hedgerows should be retained, enhanced and where possible, extended.
 - c) To create a linear park acting as a biodiversity corridor and space for recreation, supported by high-quality sustainable drainage systems along existing drains and watercourses running from the west to the north-east. SuDS should integrate into the wider landscape and green and blue infrastructure network.

- d) To remain physically and visually separate from settlements, including the defined settlements of Arborfield Cross, Barkham Hill and Finchampstead North.
- e) To provide a scale of development, which balances the physical capacity of the site, the number of dwellings required to create a sense of community and support some local services, the desired character of the development (which is derived in part through development densities), and a requirement to provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes.
- f) To achieve inclusive, balanced and healthy communities by providing a range of housing types, sizes and tenures; supported by community services and facilities and well-connected opportunities for local employment.
- g) To concentrate a mix of uses in the district centre to provide for convenience retail, nursery, planned education provision, community facilities, leisure and residential uses.
- h) To respond to the attractive rural setting, through a design response that ensures the development is absorbed into the landscape, taking account of natural features including watercourses, and to ensure a sense of the landscape permeates the development through a flood attenuation and open space strategy. Regarding the proposed allocation on land to the north of Arborfield Studios, known as Barkham Square, potential changes associated with flood risk should be addressed by containing residential development on the western side of the Barkham Brook and within the defined settlement. Development should avoid flood zone 2 and areas of potential reservoir flood risk. Surface water corridors should be left free of development.
- i) To achieve a sustainable and healthy new community, ensuring that strategic transport improvements maximise and prioritise opportunities for public transport services and active travel, including pedestrian and cycling (including integration and connection with Greenway networks). It is important that these are promoted alongside convenient road links in the future planning of the site and connect to surrounding settlements and communities. To achieve this concept, it must be underpinned by a raft of measures, including a development form which will provide local networks for alternative modes of travel, connecting to a strategic framework of high order movement corridors to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport.
- j) To expand employment facilities to provide increase opportunities for local working. Hogwood Industrial Estate will remain as a principal Core Employment Area in accordance with Policy ER1 and has scope for the expansion or intensification of employment uses.

Key place making principles

- A1.7. Proposals for the Arborfield Green SDL should be developed in accordance with Policy SS11 and the following key place making principles:
- a) Adopt a clear landscape framework which integrates the development with the landscape by providing a positive interface between the settlement edge and the rural area; and protects and enhances ecological habitats and biodiversity. Development should respond positively to the topography of the site and existing landscape features, such as trees and hedgerows, in particular the sensitive areas of woodland.

- b) Ensure connectivity between areas of SANG, parkland, open space, sport, recreation and play provision and green and blue infrastructure assets to ensure good, safe access and use.
- c) Conserve and, where appropriate, enhance heritage assets and their settings through appropriate design and provision of sufficient space surrounding these.
- d) Create a continuous network of streets to connect existing and new communities that permit easy movement in, out and within the site. Within this network a legible street hierarchy should be established to distinguish those streets associated with through movement from quieter residential streets. Residential neighbourhoods should be inclusive, safe, accessible and attractive and support an appropriate mix, type and tenure of housing to promote inclusivity and choice to suit the needs of the whole community. Careful attention should be paid to the composition of street frontages, street corners and street tree planting to ensure a continuous building line, help define streets and provide a comfortable environment. Long featureless blank frontages should be avoided.
- e) Prioritise efficient public transport services and infrastructure, walking and cycling modes and other forms of active travel alongside convenient road links to Wokingham, Reading, Winnersh and Bracknell. Walking and cycling movements should be supported by an internal network of Greenways, where appropriate, to connect to existing and new communities; and opportunities for local employment in the area, including Crowthorne and Finchampstead North as well as through Loddon Valley Garden Village (Policy SS13) towards Reading. These will provide the new community with genuine travel choices and present a range of options for journeys of different purposes and distances.
- f) Deliver a well-designed and planned district centre and supporting local centres that are accessible by forms of active travel, well integrated with the planned education provision and supported by a high-quality public realm, including high-quality, safe, accessible and well-designed open and civic spaces. The district centre should comprise an anchor foodstore (around 2,500m²), primarily selling convenience goods, as well as good levels of access to a range of day-to-day retail, leisure, service, community and residential uses located and designed to meet the demands of residents.
- g) Provide an appropriate range of densities across the SDL. Higher development densities and storey heights should be prioritised around centres, transport nodes, and along public transport routes. The use of lower densities should be informed by a detailed assessment of sensitivities, such as landscape, ecology, character and heritage.
- h) Achieve architectural design of high-quality and that ensures a sense of cohesion. New buildings, structures and spaces should be inspired by the character of the area, providing high-quality development and contributing to a strong sense of place in the borough. Development proposals must demonstrate that they are in general conformity with the design principles in the council's Design Guide (or any successor document), national guidance and current best practice.
- i) Provide parking, in all forms, which should include facilities for electric charging. Parking should ensure limited impact on visual amenity and residential privacy. Larger surface level car parks should make provision for generous planting to aid visual containment and provide shade. Development should be in accordance with the council's adopted parking standards and any relevant guidance.

Infrastructure requirements

- A1.8. Arborfield Green SDL will be supported by a strategy to ensure the timely delivery of facilities and infrastructure necessary to support each phase of delivery, and the SDL as a whole.
- A1.9. The key infrastructure requirements for the Arborfield Green SDL are set out below, with further detail, including costings set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP):

Access and movement:

- a) Implement measures to promote and improve sustainable travel through agreed travel plans or through making an appropriate contribution to the borough's My Journey initiative or any successor scheme. Travel plans should include appropriate monitoring to ensure targets are met.
- b) Provide attractive Greenway routes for cyclists and pedestrians connecting to existing settlements and linking sites of historic interest and recreational value at Wokingham, Barkham and Shinfield. Arborfield Road should have a pedestrian and cycle link between Arborfield village and Shinfield. Internal to the site, a bridleway connection to existing Greenways should be provided for horses, cyclists, pedestrians and other forms of active travel.
- c) Provide attractive pedestrian, cycle and public transport services and infrastructure within the district centre to cater for direct services to Bracknell, Reading and Wokingham. This should include appropriate and secure cycle parking and cycle/bus infrastructure, such as high-quality real-time passenger information and passenger waiting facilities.
- d) Prioritise public transport services, pedestrian and cycling facilities through and beyond the site, including improvements to the A327 corridor.
- e) Provide measures to improve active travel along the B3349 to facilitate improved walking, cycling and public transport connections; including comprehensively integrating land north of Arborfield Studios, known as Barkham Square, with the Arborfield Green SDL.
- f) Create a wayfaring system for cyclists and pedestrians. It should be attractive and distinctive in design and style, complementing the semi-rural character of the area.
- g) Improvements to Commonfield Lane to manage general traffic with more passing points and a 40mph speed limit.
- h) Investigate opportunities to improve access into the proposed allocation at Westwood Yard from Sheerlands Road.
- i) Provide bus priority corridors, one through the northern part of the site, and one through Finchwood Park in the southern part of the site.
- j) Observer Way has been delivered to create a new route providing traffic relief to existing settlements and junctions such as at Arborfield Cross. Further improvements to the highway network, including transport capacity along the A327 and Barkham Road should

include a variety of measures such as highway mitigation and improvements, provision of public transport services and infrastructure and pedestrian and cycling facilities. Any future development will need to be modelled to determine and mitigate their impact upon the highway network.

SANG and open space:

- k) Provide sufficient SANG (subject to monitoring of the quality and quantity standards); and include measures to avoid and mitigate the impact of development upon the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, in line with Policy NE3. SANG can be delivered in phases and will need to reflect Natural England's quality standards and requirements for size, access, character, availability and function.
- l) Any future development will be required to provide accessible and high-quality public open spaces (Policy HC4).

Utilities:

- l) Access to comprehensive digital connectivity will be delivered in homes, businesses and community buildings through the roll-out of Fibre to Premises (FTTP) and 4G and 5G mobile technologies (and their technological successors). All new properties will allow for the provision of gigabit-capable broadband and mobile connectivity in order to allow connection and sufficient coverage to that network as and when it is made available.
- m) Improvements should be made to the utilities network to secure capacity and connections ahead of occupation of development. Utilities will be laid in dedicated service margins off-carriageway in accordance with the council's 'Living Streets: A Highways Guide for Developers in Wokingham' or any successor document.

Community:

- n) Provide one new 2-form entry primary school (with potential to expand to a 3-form entry facility in the future) in the southern part of the site. If necessary, extension of existing schools (including appropriate onsite early years provision) will be required. Each school should provide adequate space for the integrated teaching of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
 - o) Extension to Bohunt secondary school to provide a sixth form.
 - p) Deliver a district centre and two local centres including good levels of access to a range of retail, leisure, cultural and community uses.
- A1.10. The key infrastructure requirements for the Arborfield Green SDL are set out in the council's latest Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).