

Date: 17 July 2025
Application: 251310



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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Screening Response Letter

Application Number: 251310

Site Address: Land at Blackcroft Farm, Reading Road, Arborfield

Expiry Date: 18 July 2025

Proposal: Screening Opinion application for an Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposed residential development comprising of Retirement village comprising 200 specialist homes, including a community leisure complex and a care home; erection of 450 residential dwellings including 40% affordable homes; local centre; expansion of Blackcroft Farm Industrial Estate; primary vehicular access onto Reading Road, consisting of a new 4-arm roundabout junction; landscaped public open space, and Sustainable Urban Drainage System and wildlife enhancements.

Dear Andy

Thank you for your Screening Opinion received on for land at Blackcroft Farm. The application has been screened in accordance with Regulation 6 (2) of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations 2017 (Town and Country Planning Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017) and the supporting Planning Practice Guidance and this is set out in table 1 below.

Site Description:

The site comprises five fields totalling approximately 38.65 hectares, all of which are stated to be under pastoral management. To the west, the site adjoins the Farley Hill Area of Special Character and the site incorporates Westwood Copse and Clypits Copse which are both designated Local Wildlife Sites. The site is Grade 3 and 4 agricultural land, according to Natural England. The site is enclosed by Church Road and Reading Road (A327).

Proposal Description:

The proposal is for residential development comprising of Retirement village comprising 200 specialist homes, including a community leisure complex and a care home; erection of 450 residential dwellings including 40% affordable homes; local centre; expansion of Blackcroft Farm Industrial Estate; primary vehicular access onto Reading Road, consisting of a new 4-arm roundabout junction; landscaped public open space, and Sustainable Urban Drainage System and wildlife enhancements.

Planning History:

There is no planning history on the application site. The planning history for notable developments in proximity to the site are in Appendix 1. The applicant is urged to independently also review planning history of the site and surroundings.

Assessment

Before submitting an application, developers who are in doubt as to whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required, may request a screening opinion from the Local Planning Authority in accordance with Regulations 6 (1) and 15 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations) 2017 (the '2017 Regulations'). The request seeks to determine whether or not the proposal is for a form of development that is covered by Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations and whether or not EIA is required.

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 set out that Environmental Impact Assessment's (EIA's) are needed for certain developments whereby the proposal is to have likely significant effects on the environment. The application seeks a Screening Opinion to be considered in accordance with Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Regulations 2017). The key issues for consideration are:

- whether the proposed development would comprise a Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development for the purposes of the Regulations; and if so,
- whether the development is EIA development requiring any future planning application to be accompanied by a full Environmental Statement being mindful of factors such as the nature of the development, size and location and the requirements of Schedule 3 of the Regulations.

In undertaking the assessment, the applicant is obliged to provide enough information about the proposed development for the Council to make an adequate assessment, such as providing a description of the development and a plan of the site location. Such information has been received for this submission against these requirements.

Schedule 1 Development

It is considered that the proposed development does not fall within any of the categories of development listed in Schedule 1 of the Regulations, which comprise potentially the most significantly harmful forms of development in terms of environmental risk. As such an assessment of the proposal is required to determine whether it falls within the remit of Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

Schedule 2 Development

Schedule 2 development is deemed to be those forms of development listed within Schedule 2 of the Regulations which:

- i) has any part of the development located wholly or partly in a 'sensitive area' as defined in Regulation 2(1) or
- ii) meets one of the relevant criteria or exceeds one of the relevant thresholds listed in Schedule 2.

In having regard to criteria i) above, the site is not located 'wholly or partly' within any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The site is also not within a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or World Heritage Site as defined as 'sensitive' areas within Regulation 2(1).

In addressing criteria ii), the Local Planning Authority are of the view that subcategory 10(b) (Urban Development Projects) is applicable to this proposal. The exclusion thresholds for this subcategory are:

- (i) The development includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development; or*
- (ii) the development includes more than 150 dwellings; or*
- (iii) the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares*

The proposed development exceeds all of the above. It would involve over 2ha of land that would be an employment use/ local centre so exceeds threshold (i). The proposal also involves more than 150 dwellings and has a site area of more than 5ha so exceeds (ii) and (iii). As such, the proposal qualifies as Schedule 2 development for the purposes of the 2017 Regulations, comprising an 'Infrastructure Project' falling within subcategory 10(b) for 'Urban Development Projects'. The proposal must therefore be assessed in accordance with criteria set out within Schedule 3 of the Regulations and the PPG.

When screening Schedule 2 projects, Schedule 3 selection criteria should be taken into account to determine as to whether significant effects on the environment are likely, and in turn whether an Environmental Impact Assessment would be required.

To help establish whether there would be significant effects on the environment, paragraph 058 Reference ID: 4-058-20150326 of the PPG outlines indicative criteria and thresholds as well as key issues to consider. For development projects within subcategory 10(b), this includes:

Environmental Impact Assessment is unlikely to be required for the redevelopment of land unless the new development is on a significantly greater scale than the previous use, or the types of impact are of a markedly different nature or there is a high level of contamination. Sites which have not previously been intensively developed:

- (i) area of the scheme is more than 5 hectares; or*
- (ii) it would provide a total of more than 10,000 m² of new commercial floorspace; or*
- (iii) the development would have significant urbanising effects in a previously non-urbanised area (e.g. a new development of more than 1,000 dwellings).*

The key issues to consider are: Physical scale of such developments, potential increase in traffic, emissions and noise.

The site has not been previously developed as it is agricultural land. Therefore, the above 3 criteria for sites that have not been intensively developed are applicable. In relation to criteria (i), the proposal would encompass an area of more than 5ha. In relation to (ii), this is not known at this stage. In relation to (iii) the proposal in isolation would see less than 1000 dwellings, however these would be on a non-urbanised area as the land is in an agricultural use.

However, the NPPG (018 Reference ID: 4-018-20170728) states that it should not be presumed that developments above the indicative thresholds should always be subject to assessment, or those falling below these thresholds could never give rise to significant effects, especially where the development is in an environmentally sensitive location. Each development will need to be considered on its merits.

To help assess whether the proposal would result in significant effects on the environment, owing to exceeding some of the thresholds for category 10(b), a screening exercise was conducted and this can be found in Appendix 2.

Accordingly, the Council has considered if the proposed development is likely to have significant effects on the environment. In determining such effects, the Council has taken into account the criteria for screening Schedule 2 development set out in Schedule 3 of the Regulations. These are the characteristics of the development, its location and the types and characteristics of the potential impact. Based upon the description of the development provided, the information provided in your submission, the development is considered to be likely to have significant effects on the environment in respect of transport and visual and landscape impacts. It is also likely that there will be significant effect in respect of ecology, although formal comments from the Council's Ecologist are awaited and will be provided separately once received.

Comments from the Council's internal departments have helped formed the matrix in Appendix 2. Representations from the general public and parish councils have also been received. These comments are available on the Council's website and you are encouraged to read these in full, although the key themes are summarised in Appendix 3.

Accordingly, in exercise of the powers conferred by Regulation 6 (6) (b) of the EIA Regulations 2017, the Council hereby considers that the proposed development described in your request and the documents submitted with it is 'EIA development', within the meaning of the EIA Regulations 2017, and hence a positive screening opinion is hereby adopted.

A scoping opinion can be submitted to determine the scope and level of detail required for the Environmental Statement.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

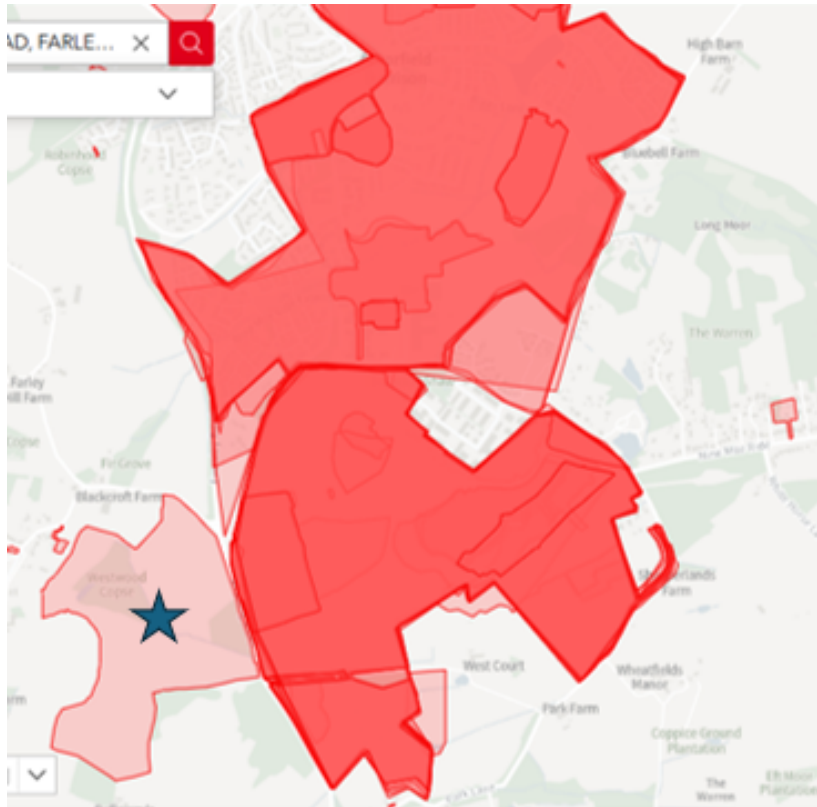


Development Management

Appendix 1 – Planning History

There does not appear to be any planning history on the site itself although there are notable applications near the site (Hogwood Farm):

- 181194 - Application to vary the following conditions of planning consent O/2014/2179 - 1.Approved parameter plans; 2.Reserved Matters; 3.Phasing; 4.NMRES; 5.Open Space; 6.Leisure and recreation; 7.Development brief; 8.Design code; 9.Neighbourhood centre; 10.Non- residential uses; 13.The primary school; 14.Employment land; 24.Bats; 39.Walking,Cycling and equine strategy; 45. Flood risk assessment; 46.Surface water drainage scheme; 62. SANG car parking; 64. SANG landscape scheme. Additional condition 66. Foul drainage
- O/2014/2179 - Application for OUTLINE PERMISSION (reserving matters of (a) access; (b)appearance; (c) landscaping; (d) layout and (e) scale FOR: Demolition of all existing buildings on site; up to 1,500 new dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 12,000 sq m of employment floor space (Use Class B2); a Neighbourhood Centre with up to 1,900 sq m of non-residential floor space (Use Classes A1/A2/A3/A4/A5 and D1); a new primary school; new sports pitches and associated pavilion building; highways infrastructure including an extension to the Nine Mile Ride and a new link from the Nine Mile Ride extension to the Hogwood Lane Industrial Estate; associated landscaping, public realm and open/green space (including children's play area); and sustainable urban drainage systems.PART 2 - Application for FULL PERMISSION for: 29.70 ha of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).
- 140977 - OUTLINE PERMISSION FOR: Demolition of buildings and phased redevelopment of Arborfield Garrison and adjoining land for: Up to 2,000 new dwellings (including up to 80 units of extra care housing). District centre comprising a foodstore up to 4,000 sq m gross with up to a further 3,500 sq m (gross) floor space within Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, D1 and D2 (with residential above - Class C3)), and transport interchange, village square, car parking, servicing and Drop off area. Up to a further 1,500 sq m (gross) floor space within Classes D1 and D2. Neighbourhood centre to provide up to 300 sq m (gross) floor space within Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, D1 and D2, with parking/servicing area. Secondary school for up to 1,500 pupils (Class D1) including sports pitches, flood-lit all-weather pitch, and indoor swimming pool and parking areas. Up to three-form primary school (Class D1) with sports pitch and parking areas. Associated phased provision of: car parking; public open space including sports pitches, informal/incidental open space, children's play areas including multi-use games area (MUGA), skate park, community gardens/allotments; landscaping/buffer areas; boundary treatments; new roads, footpaths, cycleways and bridleways; sustainable urban drainage systems, including flood alleviation works. PART 2 - FULL PERMISSION FOR phased development of: Creation of two new areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS) (In the north-eastern part of the application site ("Northern SANGS") and at West Court ("West Court SANGS") including car parking areas, path/walkways, fencing and associated landscaping; re-use of existing MoD gymnasium for sports/community uses/centre (Classes D1/D2; new roundabout junction to A327 Reading Road; junction improvements to Langley Common Road, Baird Road and Biggs Lane; junction improvements and new access at Biggs Lane/Princess Marina Drive; re-use and improvements to existing site accesses from Biggs Lane.



The application site (starred) with the above referenced application sites in darker red.

Appendix 2 – EIA Screening Matrix

LPA Reference no.	251310	Site and Proposed Development	Land at Blackcroft Farm, Reading Road, Arborfield Screening Opinion application for an Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposed residential development comprising of Retirement village comprising 200 specialist homes, including a community leisure complex and a care home; erection of 450 residential dwellings including 40% affordable homes; local centre; expansion of Blackcroft Farm Industrial Estate; primary vehicular access onto Reading Road, consisting of a new 4-arm roundabout junction; landscaped public open space, and Sustainable Urban Drainage System and wildlife enhancements.
1. EIA Details			
Is the project Schedule 1 development according to Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations?			No
If YES, which description of development (THEN GO TO Q4)			
Is the project Schedule 2 development under the EIA Regulations?			Yes
If YES, under which description of development in Column 1 and Column 2?			10 (b) – Urban Development Project
Is the development within, partly within, or near a 'sensitive area' as defined by Regulation 2 of the EIA Regulations?			No
If YES, which area?			N/A
Are the applicable thresholds/criteria in Column 2 exceeded/met?			Yes
If yes, which applicable threshold/criteria?			(i) The development includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development; (ii) the development includes more than 150 dwellings;

	(iii) the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares
2. LPA/SOS SCREENING	
Has the LPA or SoS issued a Screening Opinion (SO) or Screening Direction (SD)? (In the case of Enforcement appeals, has a Regulation 37 notice been issued)	No
If yes, is a copy of the SO/SD on the file?	N/A
If yes, is the SO/SD positive?	N/A
3. Environmental Statement	
Has the appellant supplied an ES for the current or previous (if reserved matters or conditions) application?	N/A

A Screening Criteria Question		B Response to the Screening Criteria Question in Column A (Yes/No and explanation of reasons)	C Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No and explanation of reasons (nb if the answer in Column B is 'No', Column C is not applicable))	
		Briefly explain reasons and, if applicable and/or known, include name of feature(s) and proximity to site(s)	Is a significant effect likely, having regard particularly to the magnitude and spatial extent (including population size affected), nature, intensity and complexity, probability, expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact and the possibility to effectively reduce the impact?	
4. Natural resources				
4.1 Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the topography of the area?	Yes	There will likely be changes to the site during the construction phase as soil would be excavated for foundations, drainage and access. However, these are operations that are common practice for such developments. As the development would be permanent, the only decommissioning would be of construction apparatus.	No	Full details of any level changes would be required as part of a future application. With mitigation measures in place (including landscaped design), no significant environmental impacts should arise.
4.2 Will construction or operation of the project use natural resources above or below ground such as land, soil, water, materials/minerals or energy which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Yes	Land, water, materials and energy will be used during and post-construction. The Borough of Wokingham is in an area classified by the Environment Agency as under serious water stress.	No	The construction phase can be controlled by the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Development of 450 homes and associated infrastructure would result in both significant water consumption during construction (embodied water impacts) and significant, ongoing demand for water to serve the buildings once in use (operational water impacts). However, as part of any planning application, Thames Water would be consulted who would comment on the development in relation to capacity of the water network or whether any upgrades/ mitigation would be required. All buildings would be expected to adhere to building regulations and would need to meet the sustainability objectives of the current and emerging development plan. These could be

A Screening Criteria Question	B Response to the Screening Criteria Question in Column A (Yes/No and explanation of reasons)		C Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No and explanation of reasons (nb if the answer in Column B is 'No', Column C is not applicable))	
				secured by condition and / or factored into the detailed design and sustainability statements.
4.3 Are there any areas on/around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the project, e.g. forestry, agriculture, water/coastal, fisheries, minerals?	Yes	According to the Natural England and Council mapping systems, the site is, in part, grade 3 and part grade 4 agricultural land which is of a higher quality.	No	High quality/ scarce resources would be permanently lost and sterilised. An agricultural report would be required as part of any future planning application as these resources would be permanently lost, particularly if the land is grade 3a. This can be addressed as part of a planning application
5. Waste				
5.1 Will the project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Yes	The construction and post occupation of the buildings would generate waste but this is not anticipated to be significant and would be comparable to an urban development project. Depending on the exact proposed uses within the industrial area and Local Centre, this may result in a range of waste products.	No	A site waste management plan and CEMP will reduce waste levels and could be secured via a planning condition. Full consultation would be undertaken with the Council's Cleaner & Greener team regarding waste provision and waste management details could be provided under a planning application.
6. POLLUTION AND NUISANCES				
6.1 Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	Yes	The construction phase and post occupational phase will generate vehicle movements and use of machinery on site that emit gases. Dust will be generated by the construction phase and potentially during the operational phase, depending on the use of the industrial areas. The residential end use should not generate a need for a significant amount of storage of onsite hazardous materials other than those normally stored within residential dwellings. However, this may not be the case for the non residential elements.	No	An CEMP will control dust and HGV movements together with best practice for the operation of machinery. Post occupation, travel planning measures will be expected to reduce vehicle trips. Enhancements to public transport infrastructure would need to be identified at the planning application stage. Due to the scale of the development, an air quality assessment would be expected to accompany any future planning application

A Screening Criteria Question	B Response to the Screening Criteria Question in Column A (Yes/No and explanation of reasons)		C Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No and explanation of reasons (nb if the answer in Column B is 'No', Column C is not applicable))	
				which would be reviewed by Environmental Protection Officers.
6.2 Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes	The development is likely to cause some noise, vibration and light during the demolition and construction phase due to the use of heavy machinery and construction activities. This could affect nearby sensitive receptors, particularly existing residential development in Farley Hill. During the operational phase, the project may generate noise and light, particularly from vehicle movements and activities from the various proposed uses on nearby receptors.	No	In the construction phase, this could be managed via a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Construction Method Statement (CMS). During the operational phases, noise can be assessed through the submission of noise assessments that will be reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health team. Impacts from light could have the potential to be mitigated through conditions (ie. street lighting/ industrial lighting).
6.3 Will the project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	No	The site is not identified as contaminated land, either in full or part. However, owing to the scale of the proposal, any future application should be expected to be accompanied by a contaminated land assessment.	No	A contaminated land assessment would be required at application stage and would be reviewed by Environmental Health Officers.
6.4 Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage, e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?	Not aware of any at the time of writing			

A Screening Criteria Question	B Response to the Screening Criteria Question in Column A (Yes/No and explanation of reasons)	C Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No and explanation of reasons (nb if the answer in Column B is 'No', Column C is not applicable))
7. Population and human health		
7.1 Will there be any risk of major accidents (including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge) during construction, operation or decommissioning?	Not aware of any at the time of writing	
7.2 Will the project present a risk to the population (having regard to population density) and their human health during construction, operation or decommissioning? (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)	Yes During the construction phase, activities can release dust and fumes which can cause respiratory issues and other health problems for nearby residents and workers. There is also a risk of pollutants, such as oils, chemicals, and construction debris, contaminating local water sources through surface runoff and accidental spills.	No Dust control measures, such as using water sprays, dust suppressants, and covering materials, will be employed to reduce dust emissions during construction. A management plan can be secured within the planning process to oversee these aims.
8. Water resources		
8.1 Are there any water resources including surface waters, e.g. rivers, lakes/ponds, coastal or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project, particularly in terms of their volume and flood risk?	Yes The site is located within Flood zone 1 which has a low probability of surface water flooding. The site contains an inland river.	No Likely to be able to be managed through the submission of a flood risk assessment accompanying any forthcoming planning application. This could include mitigation measures such as SUDs to manage and mitigate surface water flood risk. Sequential and exception tests required as appropriate.

A Screening Criteria Question	B Response to the Screening Criteria Question in Column A (Yes/No and explanation of reasons)	C Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No and explanation of reasons (nb if the answer in Column B is 'No', Column C is not applicable))
9. BIODIVERSITY (SPECIES AND HABITATS)		
9.1 Are there any protected areas which are designated or classified for their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, or any non-designated / non-classified areas which are important or sensitive for reasons of their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, located on or around the location and which could be affected by the project? (e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other water-bodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, undesignated nature reserves or parks. (Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local))).	Yes The site contains two Local Wildlife Sites (Westwood Copse and Claypits Copse). These are recorded as priority habitats and ancient woodlands. Part of the site is within a Natural England Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) risk consultation zone (Bramshill SSSI). The site is located within the 5km zone of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.	Yes Comments from the WBC Ecologist will be sent separately when received. However, owing to the development's proximity to the Local Wildlife Sites, there is a strong likelihood that the development may result in significant environmental impacts in this regard. The site is within the standard linear mitigation zone for the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBH SPA) that means that likely significant effects, alone or in combination, are expected from a net residential increase, unless otherwise mitigated. However, the process to consider such likely significant effects and the validity of any mitigation proposals is by Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) and not EIA.
9.2 Could any protected, important or sensitive species of flora or fauna which use areas on or around the site, e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, over-wintering, or migration, be affected by the project?	Yes The site is within an Amber and Green zone for Great Crested Newt. Impact risk zones have been derived through advanced modelling to create a species distribution map which predicts likely presence. In the red impact zone, there is highly suitable habitat and a high likelihood of great crested newt presence. The lowest presence is in the green zone. Bat roosting suitability is outside the site, to the north-west.	Wildlife is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and no works will be undertaken prior to the submission of an updated ecology report. Surveys will be undertaken prior and during construction and mitigation for habitats can be provided within the built form or within suitable areas of the grounds. An Ecological appraisal will need to accompany the application which will be reviewed by the Council's Ecologist. Arboricultural information (such as tree surveys) will also be required to be submitted alongside any planning application.

A Screening Criteria Question	B Response to the Screening Criteria Question in Column A (Yes/No and explanation of reasons)	C Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No and explanation of reasons (nb if the answer in Column B is 'No', Column C is not applicable))
		Comments from the WBC Ecologist are required to inform a final view
10. Landscape and visual		
10.1 Are there any areas or features on or around the location which are protected for their landscape and scenic value, and/or any non-designated / non-classified areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project?¹ Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local).	Yes - SSSI (as mentioned in 9.1) risk zone – <i>International designation</i> - Countryside – <i>Local designation</i> - Valued Landscape – <i>Local designation</i> - Eversley Road designated Green Route – <i>Local designation</i> - Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment as within character area L2: Farley Hill Wooded Sands and Gravels – <i>Local designation</i> - Valued Landscape	Yes Although the submitted Valued Landscape Assessment (VLA) is mentioned in the documentation, as the main body of the site is located within the Farley Hill Valued Landscape as outlined in the VLA, no further analysis is provided in the document on this matter. Overall landscape character and value is not assessed at the same level of detail as the visual amenity. The visual amenity section considers the existing views to the site but makes no comment at this stage on the effects of the proposed development in these views. One significant change that will affect openness of the views into the site will be the proposed new roundabout which will not only open up views into the site from one of the viewpoint locations but will also require a substantial amount of vegetation to be removed therefore impacting the character of the Green Route and the Valued Landscape to the west of the road. Due to the landscape sensitivity of this site as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment (L2), also being identified as being mainly within the Farley Hill Valued Landscape, and the extensive nature of the development proposals, it is considered there will be significant landscape effects from the proposed

¹ See question 8.1 for consideration of impacts on heritage designations and receptors, including on views to, within and from designated areas.

A Screening Criteria Question	B Response to the Screening Criteria Question in Column A (Yes/No and explanation of reasons)		C Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No and explanation of reasons (nb if the answer in Column B is 'No', Column C is not applicable))
			development and therefore an EIA will need to scope in Landscape and Visual Effects.
10.2 Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people? (If so, from where, what direction, and what distance?)	Yes	There are two existing Public Right of Ways that is within the site (FINC1 and SWAL24). The proposed development would be visible from these paths. The development will see an intense urban development on a presently open field which will be highly visible from a number of receptors.	Yes See 10.1 also. It is expected that the design of the development and building heights will be informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to assess the impact of the built form on sensitive receptors.

11. CULTURAL HERITAGE/ARCHAEOLOGY

11.1 Are there any areas or features which are protected for their cultural heritage or archaeological value, or any non-designated / classified areas and/or features of cultural heritage or archaeological importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project (including potential impacts on setting, and views to, from and within)? Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local).	Yes	The following heritage assets are within the site: - Devil's Highway Roman Road - Identified and other not as yet formally identified archaeological assets The site is within the setting of: - Farley Hill, Swallowfield Area of Special Character (AoSC) – Non -designated heritage asset The site is within the wider setting of: - West Court – Grade II - Hall's Farm Kennels – Grade II* - Barn at Hall's Farm Kennels – Grade II - Bulloways Farmhouse – Grade II - Woodbury House - NDHA	No From a heritage stance, the proposed development would lead to impacts to the significance of the archaeological assets with the site, and impact to the settings of the various identified built heritage assets. In terms of Archaeology, Berkshire Archaeology agree with the Archaeological Desk Based Assessment regarding the known and potential archaeological assets. In terms of built heritage, effects are not considered to result in likely significant effects based on responses received from built heritage specialists. However, a comprehensive heritage assessment and archaeological DBA, as required under para. 207 of the NPPF (2024), should be submitted with any planning application. The western boundary of the site immediately abuts the Farley Hill Area of Special Character (AoSC), and thus consideration is required as to preserve this setting too.
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A Screening Criteria Question	B Response to the Screening Criteria Question in Column A (Yes/No and explanation of reasons)	C Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No and explanation of reasons (nb if the answer in Column B is 'No', Column C is not applicable))
12. Transport and Access		
12.1 Are there any routes on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?	Yes The site incorporates two public rights of way (FINC1 and SWAL24). Church Lane is used by residents and to access Addington Early Years Centre. A327 is in close proximity to the site.	Yes Increased traffic on highway network when considering other planned development in the area (see 12.2).
12.2 Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	Yes The A237 is located to the west of the site which is a major route.	Yes There are existing commitments as part of current Strategic Development Locations (Arborfield Garrison), along with those in the emerging Local Plan Update (LPU) will contribute to cumulative effects in the area. Together these existing/emerging will deliver 5-6,000 additional homes in this part of the Borough and cumulatively this will put additional strain on the highway network.
13. Land use		
13.1 Are there existing land uses or community facilities on or around the location which could be affected by the project? E.g. housing, densely populated areas, industry / commerce, farm/agricultural holdings, forestry, tourism, mining, quarrying, facilities relating to health, education, places of worship, leisure /sports / recreation.	Yes Surrounding housing and Addington Early Years Centre.	No Pressure (and mitigation, if required) on community facilities would be assessed as part of any future planning application. The proposal's relationship with neighbouring properties will need to be assessed but could be done so under the planning application.
13.2 Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Yes See Appendix 1 for nearby development.	Yes Large scale developments approved adjacent to this site within the Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location. Implications of the cumulative effects will need to be considered in relation to material considerations such as highways. It would appear these neighbouring developments are in preparation for commencement as the LPA are in receipt of

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				various discharge of condition applications which are presently live.
14. Land stability and climate				
14.1 Is the location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, or extreme /adverse climatic conditions, e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	Not to the LPA's knowledge at the time of writing			
15. Cumulative effects				
15.1 Could this project together with existing and/or approved development result in cumulation of impacts together during the construction/operation phase?	Yes	Yes – see Appendix 1 for proximity to neighbouring applications. Plans for significant development within this part of the borough as part of the LPU.	Yes	Due to the physical scale and multi uses proposed as part of this development and those neighbouring developments.
16. Transboundary effects				
16.1 Is the project likely to lead to transboundary effects? ²	Yes	The increased pressure on the A327 corridor will contribute to transboundary effects.	Yes	Due to the substantial amount of development anticipated in this part of the borough in the near future.

² The Regulations require consideration of the transboundary nature of the impact. Due to the England's geographical location the vast majority of TCPA cases are unlikely to result in transboundary impacts.

Appendix 3

Objections raised by members of the public include the following themes:

- Cumulative impact of development
- Impact on ecology/ biodiversity
- Concern over flood risk and drainage
- Impact on traffic and highways
- Impact on the character of the area due o the scale of the proposal
- Impact on air quality and noise pollution
- Skipping the EIA process undermines the democratic planning process
- Lack of local infrastructure
- Impact on the Area of Special Character
- This would likely encourage further planning applications from exisitng properties to develop additional properties within their land
- Development is on Green Belt land
- Impact on valued landscape
- Close to SSSI
- Impact on ancient woodland
- Impact on heritage and archaeology
- Unsustainable development
- Unsustainable in transport terms
- Duplication of existing facilities which are not needed at the expense of greenfield land
- Pollution through construction phase
- Far greater percentage of Wokingham developments have happened in the south of the borough
- Several high voltage powerlines within one running through the site
- Loss of agricultural land
- Site is located in Farley Hill, not Arborfield
- There would be a carbon footprint escalation which contradicts the Council's environmental objectives
- Conflict with he Local (including Neighbourhood) plan

Parish Councils

- **Barkham Parish Council** have no comments to make on the application
- **Finchampstead Parish Council** made the following comments:

PLANNING REF : 251310
PROPERTY ADDRESS : FBC Centre
: Gorse Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham
: RG40 4ES
SUBMITTED BY : Finchampstead Parish Council
DATE SUBMITTED : 25/06/2025

COMMENTS:

Finchampstead Parish Council wish to comment upon the general principle of development in this area.

1. The location is not one where development would normally be supported within the policies of the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan.
2. The overall scale of development envisaged is not in keeping with the rural location.
3. The site occupies an elevated position above the Blackwater Valley and risks impairment to the visual amenities of the valley and the surrounding countryside.
4. Any application would need to demonstrate how it is consistent with the principle of sustainable development.
5. Any application would need to demonstrate how demands for school places will be met, and in the case of the care home, demonstrate how adequate medical resources will be provided.