

**SOUTH WOKINGHAM STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT LOCATION
EXTENSION**

**APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION TO PROVIDE A
VEHICULAR CROSSING OF BYWAY 30 AND ACTIVE TRAVEL
CONNECTIONS TO THE BYWAY TO THE NORTH**

PLANNING STATEMENT

PREPARED ON BEHALF OF

LIGHTWOOD STRATEGIC AND NICHOLAS KING HOMES



Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Site and Surroundings	6
3	The Development Concept	7
4	Relevant Planning History	9
5	Relevant Planning Policy	12
6	Planning Analysis	15
7	Planning Balance	20
8	Conclusion	21

RA Ref: LIGH0003

LPA Ref: -

Office Address: Number One
Queen Square Place
Bath
BA1 2LL

Telephone: +44 (0)1225 433675

Date of Issue: August 2024

1. Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement relates to an application for full planning permission for the following development:

- Construction of a vehicular crossing of Byway 30 to allow access for two parcels of land comprising the South Wokingham Strategic Development Location (SWSDL) Extension, together with pedestrian / cycle refuge and crossing and active travel connections to the Byway.
- Construction of a separate active travel connection to Byway 30 from the proposed future SWSDL extension.

1.2 This application (Application C) is one of a suite of three applications relating to the SWSDL extension, and should be considered in conjunction with the following applications with which it is associated:

- Application A: A hybrid application by Lightwood Strategic seeking outline planning permission for mixed use development comprising up to 850 homes and community facilities, including a neighbourhood centre (Use Classes F and/or E), with all matters reserved (apart from means of access) and a full application for SANG land and associated facilities
- Application B: An outline application by Nicholas King Homes for up to 180 homes and associated infrastructure with all matters reserved (apart from means of access).

1.3 Byway 30 is at the interface between the site areas comprised within Applications A and B. It forms the eastern boundary of the site comprised within Application B, and the north-western boundary of the site comprised within Application A. Whilst Applications A and B have been made separately, taken together they comprise the SWSDL Extension, have been planned on a composite basis, and are the subject of a single Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) relating to the overall project area.

1.4 The proposed connection to Byway 30 is from the north-western extremity of the site comprising Application A, and will facilitate sustainable travel connections between the new residential communities proposed in that application, the new communities coming forward as part of the initial phases of the SWSDL, and to the existing urban area of Wokingham. Pedestrian and cycle connectivity to Byway 30 will also be incorporated in the proposed crossing point to the south.

1.5 The following summary information is provided for the application to which this statement relates¹:

Application C	Summary Information	
Site Area	0.21	hectares
Previous / Existing Land-Use(s)	By-way	
Infrastructure		
Road crossing corridor	53.5 x 18.2	metres
Footway / Cycleway connection	6 x 3	metres

1.6 The summary details of Applications A and B with which this application is associated, are set out below:

Application A	Summary Information	
Site Area	56.04 hectares	
Previous / Existing Land-Use(s)	Agricultural	
Residential		
Existing Units	None	
Proposed Units	Market	Up to 553 (65%)
	Affordable	Up to 297 (35%)
	Total	Up to 850

¹ The final quanta may be subject to change as the applications progress, through subsequent reserved matters and other applications, and in response to market circumstances

Proposed Density	35.78 dph	
Public Open Space	31.11 hectares	
Neighbourhood Centre		
Classes E and / or F	Site Area (Market Square)	2,132m ²
	Floorspace	Up to 2,000m ²

Application B	Summary Information	
Site Area	5 hectares	
Previous / Existing Land-Use(s)	Agricultural	
Residential		
Existing Units	None	
Proposed Units	Market	Up to 117 (65%)
	Affordable	Up to 63 (35%)
	Total	Up to 180
Proposed Density	35.8 dph	
Public Open Space	1.54 hectares	

- 1.7 As cited above, the three applications are accompanied by a 'project area' Environmental Statement (ES). For the purposes of assessment of the environmental impacts, the proposals have been construed as a single project described as follows:

Mixed use development of up to 1,030 homes, community facilities including neighbourhood centre (Use Classes F and/or E), public open space, play areas, allotments and associated infrastructure and landscaping; proposed Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and access.

- 1.8 The environmental impacts to which the current application proposals will give rise are therefore taken into account through the project area Environmental Statement that accompanies all three applications. However, the specific localised impacts of the current application proposals are considered in this statement.

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 Byway 30 is currently an unconsolidated route connecting Easthampstead Road to the west with Waterloo Road to the north.
- 2.2 For the first 150 metres from its connection with Easthampstead Road, the link is referred to as Holme Green Lane, and comprises a metalled road serving six dwellings. At its western extremity Holme Green Lane forms a simple priority junction with Easthampstead Road between Redlake Lane and Heathlands Road.
- 2.3 Beyond the access to the dwellings, the route turns northwards and becomes a public right of way designated as a Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT). Therefore, it currently has rights of use by both motorised and non-motorised users. At this point the metalled surface is discontinued, and the route becomes little more than a track with an unconsolidated surface and poor drainage.
- 2.4 The route is approximately 3 – 3.5 metres in width and continues northwards to the junction with Waterloo Road. It is contained between hedgerows and trees, beyond which is currently predominantly agricultural land.
- 2.5 It is not currently lit, although an enhancement scheme is proposed as part of the live application on adjacent land to the south of Waterloo Road². In turn, this will provide a quality pedestrian / cycle corridor for future residents to route northwards towards the new physical, social and community infrastructure associated with the SWSDL, the SWDR and William Heelas Way.
- 2.6 Land to the north of Application Site B which abuts the route on its western side has outline planning permission for residential development as part of the existing SWSDL. It is anticipated that the reserved matters submissions may incorporate provisions for future access to the byway.

² Application ref. 233185

3. The Proposed Development

3.1 The application proposes a road crossing of the by-way towards its southern end, a short distance north of the point that it turns west towards Easthampstead Road and becomes Holme Green Lane.

3.2 The proposed crossing will comprise a 6.5 metre carriageway with grass verges and combined pedestrian / cycleways on either side. The crossing will run east to west at right angles to the Byway. It will incorporate a pedestrian / cycle crossing to facilitate continued movement along



the Byway, and pedestrian / cycle access in both directions from the proposed new route. It will also incorporate a 3 metre refuge island to aid crossing movements and preclude unauthorised vehicle turns onto the Byway from the new road crossing.

3.3 Movements along the Byway will be prioritised over vehicles using the new crossing. The kerb refuge island will serve a number of purposes. It will provide protection for those users wishing to cross north-south along the route of the Byway, its 3 metre depth being sufficient to accommodate pedestrian, cycle and equestrian users as well as some limited vehicular traffic, enabling users to cross a single lane at a time. It will also assist with reducing traffic speeds on the primary street through this section, reinforcing the priority to be afforded to users of the Byway. Finally, the arrangement will prevent users of the Byway from turning onto the primary street, and vice versa to prevent use of the Byway as a 'rat run'. A second, parallel crossing is intended to aid users, particularly those with visual impairment since it will utilise tactile paving. This will be required if the route is to remain a BOAT.

3.4 The crossing is necessary to deliver the access strategy for the proposed SWSDL Extension. The strategy is based on a continuous primary street through the development area as a whole between Old Wokingham Road and Easthampstead Road / Heathlands



Link. The 6.5 metre width is to facilitate future use as a public transport route, and the street incorporates shared footways / cycleways on each side.

- 3.5 The separate connection to Byway30 is a simple three metre wide footway / cycleway from the north-western boundary of Application A.

4. Relevant Planning History

- 4.1 There is limited planning history relating to the application sites themselves. However, the planning history of the wider area, and in particular the locations to the north, is important for the future context that it will provide for the application site.

Schedule 4.1 Relevant Planning Applications

Appn. Number	Proposed Development	Decision
SDL Phase 1 (Montagu Park, formerly Buckhurst Farm)		
O/2010/1712	Outline planning permission for up to 650 dwellings with neighbourhood centre, SWDR from London Road to the railway and open space	Approved (18.12.2012)
VAR/2015/0342	Variation of conditions 3 (phasing), 56 (sustainable design and construction) and 62 (affordable housing) of Planning Permission ref. O/2010/1712	Approved (02.06.2015)
161963	Variation of Conditions 3 (phasing), 7 (neighbourhood centre development brief) and 62 (affordable and specialist housing provision) and removal of condition 63 (extra care dementia housing) of planning permission ref. O/2010/1712 as amended by planning permission ref. VAR/2015/0342	Approved (11.10.2016)
SWDR (south of the Railway)		
172934	Eastern Gateway: full planning permission for a single carriageway road between William Heelas Way and Waterloo Road, including a bridge over the Reading-Waterloo Railway line and connection to Waterloo Road	Approved (19.02.2018)
192928	Full planning permission for construction of SWDR between Finchampstead Road and Waterloo Road, including a link to Heathlands Road	Approved (24.05.2021)
SDL Phase 2		
190900	Full planning permission for SANG with associated landscaping on land South of	Approved (24.05.2021)

	Anne's Manor (to be read in conjunction with applications 190914 and 191068)	
190914	Phase 2a – outline planning permission for up to 215 dwellings on land adjacent to Bigwood and east of the SDL	Resolution to approve, subject to S106 Obligation (18.05.2021)
191068	Phase 2b – hybrid application for up to 1,434 dwellings (outline) and SANG (full) on land south of Waterloo Crescent	Resolution to approve, subject to S106 Obligation (18.05.2021)
192325	Phase 2c – hybrid application for up to 171 dwellings (outline) and SANG (full) on land south east of Finchampstead Road	Resolution to approve, subject to S106 Obligation (09.03.2022)
SDL Phase 3		
211033	Outline planning permission for up to 95 dwellings following demolition of existing equestrian buildings on land west of Old Wokingham Road and south of Waterloo Road	Undetermined
Other Relevant Applications		
233185	Full application for change of use of agricultural land to outdoor sport or recreation (Class F2(c)) for use as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) with associated landscape, drainage works, car parking and access on land at Newlands Farm, Old Wokingham Road, Crowthorne	Undetermined

- 4.2 As is evident from the application history, the first phase of the SWSDL, to the north of the Railway line, was granted planning permission within three years following the adoption of the Core Strategy, in which the SWSDL was first allocated. That first phase, now known as Montagu Park, has largely been built out. The second phases, to the south of the Railway, have been much slower in coming forward, in part constrained by the lack of an eastern gateway incorporating a new railway crossing from Montagu Park.
- 4.3 The necessary road infrastructure to deliver the second phase of the SWSDL now benefits from planning permissions, with the Eastern Gateway providing a new bridge across the Railway from Montagu Park, having recently been completed. Moreover, there are



resolutions to approve outline planning permissions for residential development, and full planning permissions for supporting SANGs, across the residue of the development area. Grant funding has also recently been secured (March 2024) for delivery of the SWDR between the Eastern Gateway and Finchampstead Road.

5. Relevant Planning Policy

- 5.1 The policy framework that is considered to be relevant to the determination of the current application (C), and the two other applications (A and B) with which it is associated, is summarised below. It is likely to evolve prior to determination of the applications as it is anticipated that the Wokingham Local Plan Update will progress to Regulation 19 consultation stage by Autumn 2024, albeit that there might now be some slippage in that timetable following the very recent publication ³of the new Labour Government's proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system.
- 5.2 Although not directly relevant to the current application, since Application A incorporates small areas of land that are within the administrative area of the adjoining local planning authority to the east, the provisions of the Bracknell Forest Local Plan are also relevant to the determination of that application.

Schedule 5.1: Relevant Policies

National		
National Policy	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
Regional		
South East Area Plan (Saved)	NRM6	Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
Local (Wokingham Borough)		
Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy DPD (WBCS) (Adopted January 2010)	CP1	Sustainable Development
	CP2	Inclusive Communities
	CP3	General Principles for Development
	CP4	Infrastructure Requirements
	CP5	Housing Mix, Density and Affordability
	CP6	Managing Travel Demand
	CP7	Biodiversity
	CP8	Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

³ 30 July 2024

	CP9	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
	CP10	Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network
	CP11	Proposals Outside Development Limits (including Countryside)
	CP13	Town Centres and Shopping
	CP14	Growth and Renaissance of Wokingham Town Centre
	CP15	Employment Development
	CP21	South Wokingham Strategic Development Location
Wokingham Borough Development Plan Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDDLDP) (Adopted February 2014)	CC01	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	CC02	Development Limits
	CC03	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	CC04	Sustainable Design and Construction
	CC05	Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks
	CC06	Noise
	CC07	Parking
	CC08	Safeguarding Alignments of the Strategic Transport Network and Road Infrastructure
	CC09	Development and Flood Risk
	CC10	Sustainable Drainage
	TB05	Housing Mix
	TB07	Internal Space Standards
	TB12	Employment Skills Plan
	TB15	Major Town, Small Town / District Centre Development
	TB16	Development for Town Centre Uses
	TB17	Local Centres and Neighbourhood and Village Shops
	TB20	Service Arrangements and Deliveries for Employment and Retail Use
	TB21	Landscape Character
	TB23	Biodiversity and Development
	TB24	Designated Heritage Assets

	TB25	Archaeology
Wokingham Local Plan Update (WLPU)	SS1	Spatial Strategy
Revised Spatial Strategy Consultation (November 2021)	SS7	South Wokingham Strategic Development Location
Supplementary Documents (SPD) Planning	BDG	Borough Design Guide
	SWSDL	South Wokingham Strategic Development Location SPD (2011)
	IDC	Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD (2011)
	AH	Affordable Housing SPD (2011)
	SDC	Sustainable Design and Construction SPD + Companion Guide (2010)
Local (Bracknell Forest Borough)		
Bracknell Forest Local Plan (2020-2037) (Adopted March 2024)	LP 1	Sustainable Development Principles
	LP 14	Transport Principles
	LP 15	Design Principles
	LP 16	Green Infrastructure
	LP 17	Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
	LP 31	Development of Main Town Centre Uses Outside of Designated Centres
	LP 35	Development in the Countryside
	LP 37	Landscape Character (Outside of Defined Settlements)
	LP 42	Design

- 5.3 Through the Planning Analysis in Section 6 the alignment of the proposals with the relevant national and local planning policies will be considered, and the weight to be given to the provisions of the Development Plan and other material considerations will be assessed.

6. Planning Analysis

Principle of Development

- 6.1 The principle of residential and related development within the project area comprising the SWSDL Extension incorporating the application sites with which the development proposed in this application is associated, is considered in the Planning Statements accompanying the respective applications (A and B).
- 6.2 Through those Planning Statements it has been demonstrated how the proposed SWSDL Extension comprised in Applications A and B is consistent with the locational strategy of the adopted Development Plan, and that the majority of the land that they comprise (including the current application site) is already included within the SWSDL, albeit indicated for SANG rather than built development. However, it has been established through consideration of the earlier applications relating to the SWSDL that the principle of relocating SANG in the countryside beyond the defined limits of the SWSDL, thus allowing built development on land within the defined limits, is acceptable.
- 6.3 Since the current application site, that of Application B, and the immediately adjoining area of Application A, are already within the defined limits of the SWSDL, there is no objection in principle to built development on the land subject to satisfactory alternative provision for SANG, which in principle is acceptable in the countryside beyond the defined limits of the SWSDL.
- 6.4 Notwithstanding the foregoing, it is anticipated that, by the time of determination of applications with which the current one is associated, the Regulation 19 Local Plan will have been published and progressed to a stage at which it can be afforded weight, and which may include an extension to the SWSDL that reflects the proposals contained in the three applications.
- 6.5 The current application is indivisible from Applications A and B since it is integral to delivering the access strategy on which the overall proposed SWSDL Extension is based. It follows that, if the related applications are found to be acceptable in principle, then there can be no objection in principle to the proposals the subject of the current application.

Arboricultural Impacts

- 6.6 The baseline arboricultural survey that was undertaken to inform the overall proposals comprised in Application A included the trees associated with Byway30.
- 6.7 The specific assessment of the impacts of the current application proposals is that eight trees/hedgerows are impacted by the proposals, including 1 no. category A, 5 no. category B and 4 no. category C. The category A tree will be unaffected, as will one of those within Category B. There will be partial removal of 4 items in category B and 4 in category C.
- 6.8 The position of the crossing has been informed by the arboricultural assessment, and carefully planned to minimise impacts in terms of tree and hedgerow loss. There will be substantial new planting throughout the wider development area, including the extensive area of SANG, which will more than mitigate for any minor impacts arising from the byway crossing, which is essential to ensure a sustainable and well connected urban extension.
- 6.9 There will be no tree removal associated with the pedestrian / cycleway connection to Byway30 at the north-western extremity of the development area to the east of the route.

Ecological Impacts

- 6.10 An assessment of the impacts of the overall proposals for the SWSDL extension on biodiversity is included in the Environmental Statement for the project area that accompanies the application. Since that assessment relates to the overall development, and the highway crossing of Byway 30 is integral to the access strategy for the overall development, it incorporates assessment of the impacts of the proposals the subject of the current application.
- 6.11 The overall findings of the assessment of impacts on biodiversity were that, apart from significant residual effects on brown hare and ground nesting birds due to loss of suitable habitat (predominantly open grassland), all other biodiversity impacts would be negligible.

- 6.12 The current application does not involve the loss of any open grassland habitat suitable for nesting birds. It therefore does not contribute to the significant residual adverse effects on nesting birds that are identified in the Environmental Statement.
- 6.13 Notwithstanding the foregoing, since the current proposals are the subject of a standalone application for full planning permission, the potential impacts of the development that is proposed on biodiversity have been subject to specific assessment. That assessment is included in Technical Appendix 10.3 to the Environmental Statement, which is also submitted with this application as a standalone document.
- 6.14 The assessment confirmed that there are no designated sites within the application site, nor does it incorporate ancient woodland or priority habitats. The site comprises a Byway of artificial, unvegetated, unsealed surface lined with two hedgerows and areas of mixed scrub. It does not meet the criteria as a habitat of principal importance, and is not considered to be of particular nature conservation importance⁴. Nevertheless, the hedgerows are native, species-rich, with trees associated with a ditch. The artificial, unvegetated, unsealed surface of the Byway with hedgerows is considered to provide good potential for hedgehog and brown hare. There was no evidence of badger setts or hazel dormouse.
- 6.15 The hedgerows were assessed to be the only valuable features for commuting or foraging bats, and provide good connectivity to the wider area through woodland copses and a larger connected woodland section to the north of the site. Given the surface of the Byway, no opportunity is provided for ground nesting birds. Similarly, it provides negligible habitat for invertebrates, with the mature trees in the hedgerows providing the key opportunities in this respect. However, the proposals involve limited tree removal.
- 6.16 Given that the proposed development affects only a very limited part of the overall Byway, and the majority of it will be unaffected, the impacts on biodiversity are considered to be negligible. The mitigation measures embedded in the overall proposals take into account any minor impacts arising from the Byway crossing. Moreover, any necessary Biodiversity Net Gain requirements will be accommodated within the provisions for the wider project area.

⁴ EIA, Technical Appendix 10.3, para. 3.2.4

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.17 There are no major watercourses within the site. However, drainage ditches flank Byway 30 on its east and west sides which flow in a southerly direction towards a drainage ditch to the north of Easthampstead Road.

- 6.18 An Ordinary Watercourse comprising a tributary of the Emm Brook is located approximately 260 metres to the south of the site. The nearest main river, Emm Brook, is located approximately 540 metres to the south west and flows in a north-easterly direction towards Wokingham.

- 6.19 The site is in Flood Zone 1 and is therefore not affected by fluvial flooding. It has areas of low, medium and high risk of surface water flooding. The surveyed levels indicate that surface water will run off Byway 30 and flow into the peripheral drainage ditches.

- 6.20 Overall, the site is deemed to be at low risk of flooding subject to the implementation of an appropriate strategy for managing the surface water runoff within the Byway and its ditches.

- 6.21 Given the minor nature of the proposed works, neither a sequential nor exception test are required⁵

- 6.22 The proposed development will be designed to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on floodplain storage. Further investigation of the flows in the ditches and their capacity will be undertaken to inform the detailed design of the crossing, the culverts and any associated ditch channel works. Floodplain storage is unlikely to be affected as the issue relates to the conveyance of surface water flow. The residual flood risk to the site is low.

- 6.23 The proposed development will result in minimal change to the impermeable areas. The new road will incorporate associated highway drainage that will collect surface water runoff from the site, and any impacts on the natural flow regime consequent upon any raising of levels, will be mitigated by the highway drainage strategy within the wider development area.

- 6.24 The pedestrian/cycle connection will result in negligible change in the impermeable area given that Byway 30 is not currently permeable.

⁵ NPPF, para. 174

- 6.25 Given the above circumstances the proposals are compliant with national and local planning policies relating to flood risk and drainage. The risk of onsite flooding is adequately managed and, subject to the implementation of a suitable surface water drainage strategy, the offsite flood risk is not increased.

7. Planning Balance

- 7.1 For the reasons outlined above, the environmental impacts of the proposed development will be minimal. To the extent that there are negative impacts in terms of partial tree and hedgerow removal, they contribute **moderate** weight on the negative side of the planning balance.
- 7.2 However, as stated above, the current application proposals are indivisible from the applications for the SWSDL Extension with which they are associated. The benefits of the proposed development the subject of those applications (A and B) are set out in the respective Planning Statements accompanying those applications.
- 7.3 Given that the current proposals are to facilitate a coherent and connected development area overall, as well as to maximise the sustainable transport opportunity that is afforded by the existing Byway, it gives rise to benefits to which **significant** weight should be afforded in the overall planning balance.
- 7.4 Considered overall in conjunction with the wider development proposals with which they are associated and from which they are indivisible, the benefits of the current proposals clearly outweigh any limited disbenefits to which they will give rise.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 In conclusion, there is no objection in principle to the current proposals which are for essential transport infrastructure within the existing SWSDL boundary. The principle of departing from the indicative concept plan for the SWSDL has been endorsed through earlier phases of development.
- 8.2 The proposals are indivisible from the wider proposals for the SWSDL Extension contained in the parallel applications to the east and west of the current application site, and are essential to the access and sustainable transport strategies on which those proposed developments are premised. If the associated applications, with the substantial benefits to which they will give rise, are held to be acceptable, then the current application should also be approved.
- 8.3 Considered on their merits, the current application proposals do not give rise to unacceptable harm in terms of landscape or biodiversity, and any limited impacts to which they will give rise can be satisfactorily mitigated through the wider proposals with which they are associated. That mitigation is taken into account in the environmental assessment of the overall project, and embedded in the concept plans and illustrative masterplan, together with the landscape and biodiversity net gain strategies, associated with the composite proposals.

