

Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/X0360/W/25/3371069

Wokingham Borough Council Ref: 243099

Land north of Reading Road, Arborfield

Landscape Statement of Common Ground Between the Appellant and Wokingham Borough Council

2nd February 2026

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Section 1: Matters Agreed

- 1.1 This Landscape Statement of Common Ground will be revisited following exchange of the evidence and an update, if necessary, will be provided to PINS.

Site and Surroundings

- 1.2 Reading Road is designated as a Green Route.

Submitted LVA

- 1.3 An LVA was submitted at the application stage. No requests were made to the appellant to supply further information regarding landscape and visual effects, although concerns as to the adequacy of the LVA were noted in the Council's Landscape Architect's response as published on the website following the determination of the application and as referred to on page 17 of the Officer Report
- 1.4 The Council did not instruct, or prepare, its own LVA or LVIA, the application was determined by reference to the Appellant's submitted assessment, cognisant of the views expressed by the Council's Landscape Architect.
- 1.5 To date, the appellant has not provided an assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the works arising from the creation of the points of access and off-site highways works relating to the pedestrian footpath, bus stops, lighting columns and road markings, such works include the removal of and works to some trees.
- 1.5.1 It is agreed that the appellant's assessment will be contained in the Appellant's landscape evidence.

Published Landscape Character Assessments – prepared by the Council

- 1.6 The following documents describe and classify areas of distinctive character. In respect of the Appeal Site the following are noted and are relevant to understanding the Site's context:
- 1.6.1 National Character Area (NCA) NCA 129: Thames Basin Heath;
- 1.6.2 Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019)
- 1.6.2.1 C1: Arborfield River Terrace
- 1.6.2.2 J2: Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay
- 1.7 The parties agree finer grain analysis is necessary, in line with the guidance contained in '*An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*,' Natural England, October 2014.

Landscape Value

- 1.8 The Appeal Site is not within a National Landscape or NPPF, para 187(a) Valued Landscape.
- 1.9 The intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside needs to be recognised (Para 187(b) of the NPPF) so that planning decisions can contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

1.10 Outside of existing settlements, allocations and core employment locations, Wokingham Borough is subject of a number of environmental and planning designations, which potentially constrain development, including, but not limited to:

- Ancient Woodland and Ancient or Veteran Trees
- SNCIs, Local Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves
- Thames Basin Heath SPA mitigation Zones
- SSSIs
- Green Belt
- Sites of Urban Landscape Value
- Conservation Areas
- Areas of Special Character
- Local Historic Parks and Gardens
- National Historic Parks and Gardens
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Green Routes

1.11 With the exception of Thames Basin Heath SPA Mitigation Zone, Green Route ancient or veteran trees on and adjacent to the Site, the remaining policy constraints do not apply to the Appeal Site.

1.12 The Site's value is not directly enhanced by its relationship to surrounding Valued Landscapes.

Section 2: Areas of Disagreement

- 2.1 The key issues are emboldened, with an explanation of the Council's (shaded grey) and Appellant's respective positions set out, where necessary.

Landscape Issues

- 2.2 **Whether or not the Appellant's LVA appropriately followed the guidance contained in the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (Revision 3), 2013, including assigning the value and sensitivity of the receptors.**

2.2.1 The Council is of the view that there are flaws in Appellant's approach to this.

2.2.2 The Appellant disagrees and will address these matters in evidence.

- 2.3 **The extent, scale and nature of the landscape effects arising from the development including highways and drainage works (onsite and offsite).**

2.3.1 The Council's position is that this also includes the extent, scale and nature of the landscape effects arising from the proposed flood mitigation measures, access points and highway works.

2.3.2 Further, The SPA Mitigation Zone and ancient and veteran trees will be addressed by the technical specialists. Additional highway improvement works would be visible from Arborfield Cross Conservation Area.

2.3.3 The Appellant disagrees with the suggest approach to disaggregating the proposals; the proposals are assessed as a whole in line within the published guidance this will be addressed in evidence.

- 2.4 **The effectiveness of any and all mitigation proposed.**

- 2.5 **The effects of the proposals on the Green Route.**

2.5.1 The Council does not consider that the proposals would protect or enhance the Green Route along Reading Road.

2.5.2 The Appellant is of the view that the policy requirement (MDD, Policy C003) is to demonstrate how the relevant criteria have been considered and achieved. It is the appellants view that the requirements of the policy have been met. This will be addressed in the Appellant's written evidence.

Visual Issues

- 2.6 Whilst the parties agree that the viewpoints shown in the LVA and from all locations along Reading Road and Church Lane are relevant to the determination of the appeal the following matters are not agreed/resolved:

2.6.1 The Council considers that the following viewpoints of the proposed works (as identified in the Council's correspondence sent on 21st, 28th and 29th January 2026) are pertinent to the appeal:

2.6.1.1 the impacts of proposed highways works,

2.6.1.2 the main access and the views into the site at this point,

2.6.1.3 the wider impacts of the main access looking up and looking down Reading Road (including the additional proposed tree removal),

2.6.1.4 the locations of pedestrian access point/s onto Reading Road and the views into the site at this/these points,

2.6.1.5 the locations of pedestrian access point onto Church Lane and the views into the site at this point,

2.6.1.6 views into the site from the western part of Reading Road across the thinner hedgerows to the west of the proposed new vehicular access,

2.6.2 The Appellant sought to narrow down the above list, but the Council feels the Appellant's wording would represent an overly narrow interpretation of what the effects of these works would be. Hence this section is in matters disagreed, although it is factually correct these viewpoints had been shared with the Appellant.

2.6.3 The appellant notes that the Council has not provided a viewpoint location plan the correspondence referred to relates to drafts of the LSoCG, the general description has not changed since 21st January 2026, with the exception of changing "the impacts of proposed highways "improvements"" to "the impacts of proposed highway works in paragraph 2.6.1 above. The Council has not identified these viewpoints, relating to the Appeal Site and Arborfield Cross Conservation Area, any more precisely than above.

2.6.4 The assertion that the offsite highways works will harm views into and out from the Arborfield Cross Conservation area will be addressed in evidence.

2.6.5 The Appellant is of the opinion that the way in way people experience the visual environment is as a series of views passing through the landscape on the road. The Appellant's witness will also provide an assessment of the visual effect in respect of the sequential experience and the impacts of the access points created on Reading Road and Church Lane.

2.7 The extent to which the absence of winter photography is relevant to understanding the likely effects.

2.7.1 It is the Council's position that this is a failing in the process and the assessment of effects provided by the appellant in this regard inadequately represents the impacts.

2.7.2 The appellant disagrees and is of the opinion, that through the commissioning of highly experienced landscape assessors to undertake the assessment of effects that there is sufficient information contained with the LVA and the AVRs to allow the practitioner to interpolate the visual material (having visited the site during the winter months (day and night time)) to provide a robust assessment of the likely effects to assist the Inspector.

- 2.7.3 The appellant's evidence will address this matter and provide further photographic material, as necessary.
- 2.8 The extent and scale of the visual effects both day and night time.
- 2.9 Whether or not the Council should provide its own LVIA.

Signed by:

Clare Brockhurst FLI on behalf of the appellant:



Date: 2nd February 2026

Chris Hannington CMLI MRTPI on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council:



Date: