



Land North of School Road,

Arborfield Cross,

Wokingham

Design & Access Statement

croudacehomes

March 2025



1. Introduction

The proposed development at Land North of School Road, Arborfield Cross presents an opportunity to deliver high-quality, sensitively designed housing that complements the village setting while addressing local housing needs. While the previous Outline Planning Application was refused, it received several supportive comments, and we have carefully considered this feedback to refine and enhance our proposals. Key updates include a centrally located green space, improved landscape buffers, and an enhanced access strategy, ensuring the development integrates seamlessly with Arborfield Cross while delivering a sustainable and well-balanced neighbourhood.

Key aspects of the scheme received constructive comments and feedback, including its placemaking potential and the opportunity to provide new housing. These elements have been considered and strengthened in this revised proposal, while also directly responding to the feedback from the previous decision to ensure a well-integrated and sustainable extension to the village.



^Exemplar images

This updated Design and Access Statement (DAS) sets out how the revised scheme has been carefully refined to address key areas of concern while retaining and enhancing its strongest aspects. Specifically, the proposal now:

- **Strengthens Village Character and Integration** – The density and layout have been refined to align more closely with the existing settlement pattern and rural character of Arborfield Cross.
- **Enhanced Landscape & Visual Integration** – The illustrative masterplan now incorporates stronger green buffers, an improved open space network, and additional structural tree planting, reinforcing the landscape-led approach.
- **Repositioned Central Open Space** – A significant change in the revised Masterplan is the relocation of open space to the heart of the development, creating a focal point for the community and ensuring accessibility for all residents. This adjustment enhances the spatial quality of the scheme and strengthens green infrastructure connections.
- **Site Access and Connectivity** – Addressing previous comments, the access strategy has been refined to ensure safe and efficient connections with the local road network and green route

- **Delivers Biodiversity Net Gain and Ecological Enhancements** – The proposals exceed biodiversity net gain requirements, creating a strong green infrastructure network that supports local habitats.
- **Incorporates a robust sustainable drainage strategy** – The scheme now includes comprehensive flood risk mitigation measures, integrating sustainable drainage solutions in line with best practice.

By incorporating positive feedback and proactively addressing previous comments, this revised proposal demonstrates a commitment to delivering a well-designed, sustainable, and policy-responsive development that integrates seamlessly with Arborfield Cross and supports local needs.

This application seeks Outline Planning Permission for a residential development of up to 70 homes at Land North of School Road, Arborfield Cross, with all matters reserved except for access. The proposal is landscape-led and aims to deliver a high-quality, sustainable community that integrates sensitively with the surrounding village.

Key Elements of the Proposal:

- Up to 70 new homes, delivering a mix of dwelling sizes to meet local housing needs

- 40% affordable housing (to up to 28 homes), ensuring a range of tenures to support local families and key workers
- Creation of a high-quality residential development to provide new housing for the village and help the Council meet its chronic undersupply
- Provision of new public open space and play areas
- Provision of 34.48% Biodiversity Net Gain achieved through habitat creation of high ecological value, which could include new native woodland planting, wildflower meadows and a community orchard.
- New pedestrian and cycle links, improving connectivity with the village and enhancing sustainable transport modes in the area
- A comprehensive Sustainable urban Drainage Strategy, which could include swales, rain gardens attenuation basins and permeable surfaces
- An improved road layout on School Road, designed to ensure safe and efficient movement
- A landscape-led development, featuring enhanced green buffers, a centrally located public open space and improved biodiversity
- Retention of existing hedgerows and trees where possible with additional planting to minimise visual impact
- Contribution of an additional population and financial contributions to support local services and facilities in excess of £2.5m via the Community Infrastructure Levy.

The graphic below highlights the positive aspects identified in the previous application, as well as the key points raised to date. It provides a clear and structured overview of how these have been addressed and improved across the different technical disciplines, ensuring the revised scheme is more responsive to the local context and planning policies.

Each discipline – design, landscape, highways, drainage, and biodiversity – has been carefully considered to enhance the scheme and overcome previous concerns. The revisions reflect stakeholder input, technical assessments, and best-practice urban design principles, ensuring a well-integrated and sustainable development that complements Arborfield Cross.



^Exemplar images



^Exemplar images

Landscape & Biodiversity * → Highways * → Drainage * → Design

The revised proposal enhances the landscape-led approach, reinforcing the rural character of Arborfield Cross. Existing hedgerows and tree belts have been strengthened, with additional planting to create a natural buffer between the development and the countryside. A central green space provides an attractive focal point while improving biodiversity and public open space. The scheme delivers a 34.48% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), significantly enhancing local ecology and green infrastructure, demonstrating our commitment to a sustainable and nature-rich development

Two transport-related reasons were given for the previous refusal. Reason 9, concerning insufficient information, has been resolved through additional details provided in the Highways consultation response. The second reason sought evidence of a modal shift towards sustainable transport. To address this, the layout has been adjusted to create a more indirect vehicle route, and contributions towards public transport will be secured as previously requested.

A fully integrated Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) has been incorporated, ensuring effective surface water management and supporting biodiversity. The layout now includes attenuation basins, swales, and rain gardens, which contribute to both drainage efficiency and visual quality. These features create a more resilient and sustainable landscape, mitigating flood risk while enhancing green corridors across the site. The strategy aligns with best practices, providing confidence in the long-term sustainability of the development.

The masterplan has been refined to create a well-balanced, high-quality neighbourhood that respects the character of Arborfield Cross. The introduction of a central green space improves placemaking, offering a shared space for recreation and community interaction. The layout has been adjusted to enhance permeability, introduce tree-lined streets, and ensure a more spacious and varied arrangement of homes. By reinforcing local distinctiveness and creating a thoughtful, landscape-integrated design, the scheme positively contributes to the village while addressing previous feedback.



2. Our Vision



Our vision for Land North of School Road is to create a **well-integrated neighbourhood** that complements the **local character of Arborfield Cross** while ensuring a **sensitive transition** to its rural setting. The revised proposal balances **appropriate density, enhanced landscape integration, and green buffers** to minimise visual impact. Prioritising **placemaking and sustainability**, the scheme achieves over **34.48% Biodiversity Net Gain**, retains existing vegetation, and incorporates **sustainable drainage solutions (SuDS)**. A strong emphasis on **active travel** promotes safe walking and cycling routes, fostering connectivity and healthier lifestyles. These refinements ensure the development **delivers much-needed new homes** while respecting Arborfield Cross's valued rural character.



3. Context Analysis

In this section we analyse the wider and immediate context of the site allowing us to form an understanding of the opportunities to drive the appropriate design principles forward.

The Site is ideally located to the northeast of the rural and green village of Arborfield Cross, south west of Wokingham. In its wider setting the site benefits to access to different modes of transport leading to London, Oxford and Reading. The M4 is easily accessible providing further links East and West.

- Site Location
- Existing Settlements
- National Landscape Areas
- Motorways
- Main Movement
- Railway Line
- Train Station
- Heathrow International Airport

To Southampton

To Midlands & North of England

To Midlands & North of England

London

3.1 Planning Context

The development plan for the purposes of this application is:

- The Core Strategy (CS), adopted on January 2010;
- The Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan, adopted on February 2014;
- Saved Policy NRM6 (Natural Resource Management) of the South East Plan;
- Joint Minerals and Waste Plan, adopted January 2023; and
- The Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan, made on April 2020.

The Core Strategy is over 15 years old, while the MDD is 11 years old. In accordance with Annex 1, Paragraph 232 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) (The Framework), due weight is given to Development Plan policies based on their consistency with the Framework (“the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given”).

Policies relating to housing delivery in both documents, alongside the made Neighbourhood Plan, are considered out-of-date.

The Framework states that where development plan policies are out-of-date, permission must be granted unless adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework (Paragraph 11d(ii)).

The Framework directs planning authorities to make positive and creative decisions, seeking to approve sustainable development where possible (Paragraph 39).

The Wokingham Borough Five-Year Housing Land Supply Statement (published 30th January 2025)

sets out housing completions as of 31st March 2024 and the supply of deliverable sites for 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2029.

Following December 2024 planning reforms, including updates to the Local Housing Need (LHN) formula, the Council has reassessed its five-year housing land supply using the standard method and additional buffers.

As a result, Wokingham Borough’s LHN increased from 748 dwellings to 1,336 dwellings per annum, a 78% increase. This new LHN was applied to the housing land supply position at 31st March 2024.

Performance against the latest Housing Delivery Test requires the Council to apply a 5% buffer, having delivered 169% of required homes over the last three years. Total housing need over five years, including the buffer, is 7,014 dwellings.

As of 31st March 2024, the Council can only demonstrate a 1.7-year housing land supply, with 2,321 deliverable dwellings against the 5-year requirement of 7,014 dwellings. This represents a significant shortfall.

Wokingham Borough Council has now submitted its Local Plan Update (LPU) to the Secretary of State (28th February 2025). However, the LPU does not account for the December 2024 increase in local housing need.

Transitional arrangements in Paragraph 236 of the Framework NPPF state that where an adopted plan meets less than 80% of local housing need, the local authority must begin work on a new plan as soon as provisions take effect.

Under Paragraph 49, the submitted LPU holds very limited weight, as it faces fundamental unresolved objections.

3.2 Responding to National and Local Guidance

Within the analysis of the context we take into consideration any design policy or guidance document that might be relevant for the area. We have identified the following relevant documents:

- **Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location (SDL) Supplementary Planning Document (2011, WBC)** - The SDL creates the opportunity to re-use a substantial area of brownfield land at Arborfield Garrison. The location is identified in the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy as being capable of accommodating around 3,500 new dwellings with associated transport and green community infrastructure.
- **The National Design Guide (NDG)** - NDG addresses the question of how we recognise well-designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government’s priorities through the demonstration of meeting ten key characteristics. These characteristics work together in a mutually supporting way, to create the physical character of a place, nurture and sustain a sense of community, and positively address environmental issues affecting climate.



^Exemplar images

- **The Arborfield & Newland Village Design Statement (VDS)** - Outlines the community’s vision for preserving the rural character of the parish while guiding future development. The document emphasises the area’s low-density housing, use of local red brick, and buildings that blend into natural green spaces. Key guidelines include maintaining the rural landscape, encouraging diversity in housing styles, setting buildings back from roads, and using sustainable building practices. The VDS also highlights the importance of preserving farmland, trees, and hedgerows, as well as the careful integration of new developments to maintain the area’s historical and architectural character. It stresses the need for adequate off-road parking, the use of traditional materials, and minimising light pollution to protect the area’s distinct rural ambience.
- **Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan** - The Plan was made in April 2020 and seeks to protect the rural character of the area, manage sustainable development, and ensure that new proposals align with local needs.

3.3 Movement & Facilities

Walking/Wheeling/Cycling

Pedestrian footways are provided along the southern side of School Road, featuring frequent dropped kerbs at crossing points and intermittent street lighting. The site is well-connected to an extensive network of Public Rights of Way (PROWs), including by-ways along Cole Lane. Additionally, Wokingham Borough Council has proposed new PROWs and identified Greenway Routes, further enhancing connectivity across the area.

The site is within walking distance of key local amenities, including a convenience store, village hall, The Coombes Church of England Primary School, and The Bull Inn pub. The provision of new homes will support the viability of these local services. Further afield, Arborfield Green provides additional facilities, accessible via walking, cycling, or bus routes.

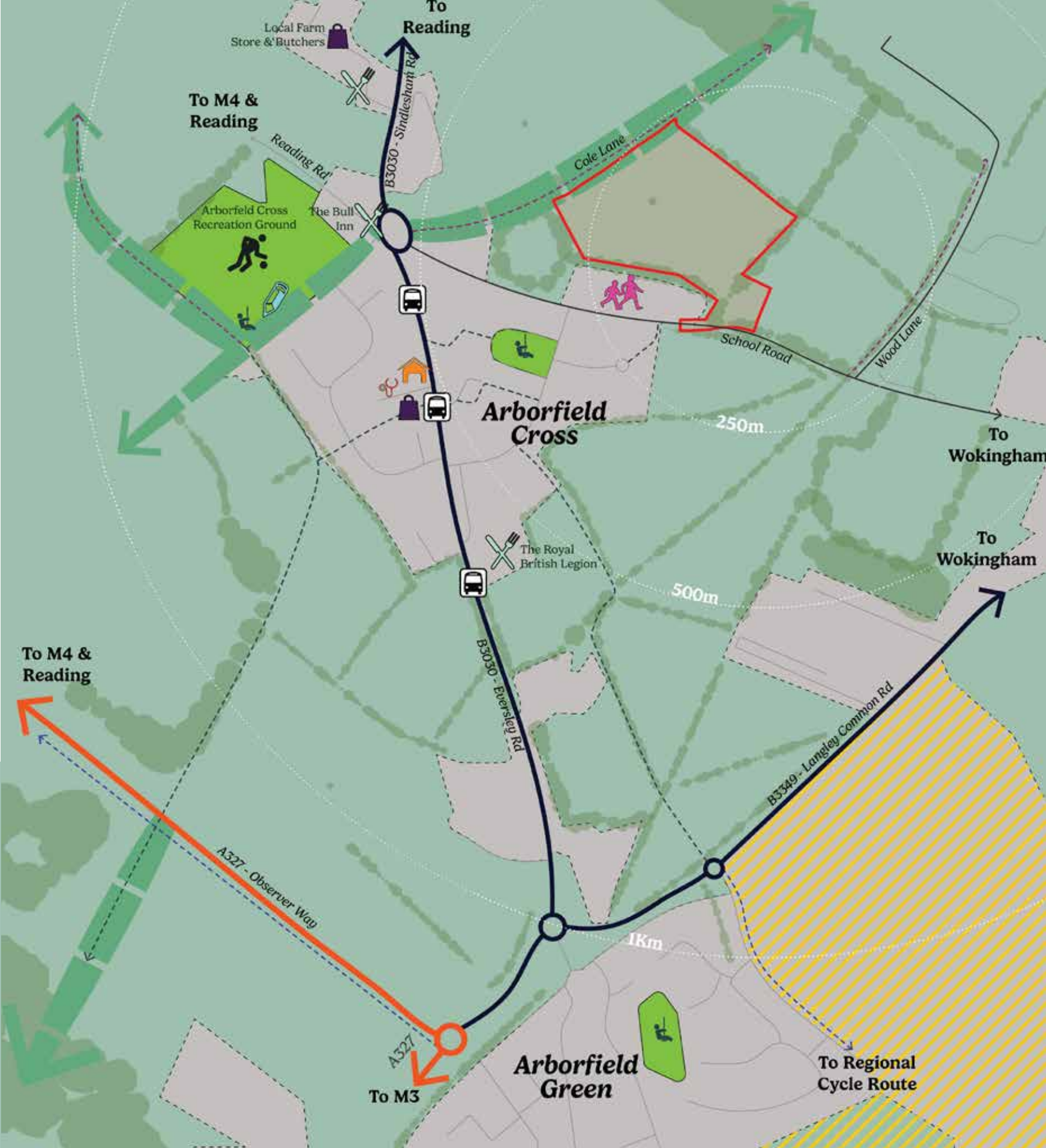
The area is served by existing cycle routes, including a Regional Cycle Route that passes through Arborfield Green, linking Crowthorne, Swallowfield, and Greenham, and intersecting with National Cycle Route 23 at Beech Hill. The site is within a five to eight-kilometre cycling distance from Arborfield Green, Wokingham, Winnersh, Barkham, and Reading, providing convenient access to a broader range of services.

Public Transport

The nearest bus stops are The Swan stops, approximately 250 to 500 metres from the site, providing access to the 145 and 3 Leopard bus routes. These services offer connections to Wokingham, Reading, and other key destinations.

Local Highway Network

Arborfield Cross is accessed via the B3030, which provides connectivity to the surrounding road network. The construction of the A327 relief road, linking to the M4 to the north, has significantly reduced through-traffic in Arborfield Cross, improving local traffic flow.



3.4 Character Analysis

Arborfield Cross is a semi-rural village with a varied and evolving character, shaped by its historic origins, mix of housing styles, and strong connection to the surrounding landscape. The village has grown over time, incorporating a range of building forms, densities, and layouts that contribute to its distinct identity.

Diverse Housing Mix & Settlement Patterns

- **Strong Linear Settlement Patterns** – Many streets in Arborfield Cross follow a clear linear form, creating consistent building lines that define the village structure.
- **Different Setbacks & Orientation** – Housing varies in setback and orientation, contributing to an informal yet cohesive streetscape.
- **Rural Character & Transitions** – Edges of the village soften into open countryside, with clusters of homes integrated with green buffers.
- **Varied Garden Sizes** – While some areas contain larger private gardens, the majority of homes have moderate garden sizes, with limited access to public open space.
- **Higher-Density Clusters** – Parts of the village contain compact layouts of semi-detached and terraced homes, demonstrating an efficient use of land.

Understanding Density in Arborfield Cross

A detailed analysis has shown that certain areas reach a density of 28 dwellings per hectare (dph), aligning with the proposed development, while the overall village average is 23 dph. The presence of larger gardens in some areas artificially lowers the overall density, but this does not represent the dominant housing pattern across the village.

This understanding informs our approach, ensuring that the new development integrates seamlessly into the village fabric while respecting its character, scale, and landscape setting.

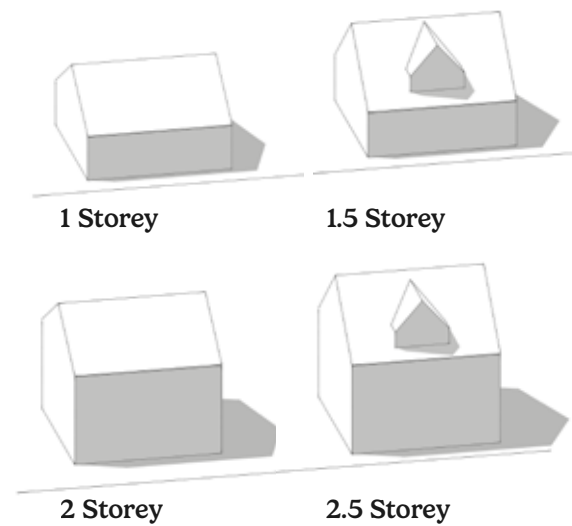


Urban Form

- Eversley Road is characterised by a strong linear street pattern reflecting its purpose as a main vehicular movement corridor.
- Characterised by a varied vernacular resulting in variations in the building line and creating an informal, urban character.
- Comprises an informal, more rural character with medium to low density dwellings and a less continuous building line.
- Setbacks vary along the length of the street.
- Mainly semi-detached and terraced houses. With some detached houses within large plots.

Built /Plot Form

- Building heights vary from 1 storey to 2.5 storey creating variation in the roofscape and street scene.



Public Realm and Open Space

- Incidental green spaces are present throughout the village and create an attractive street scene.
- Proximity to the surrounding countryside further contributes to an overall green and rural character.
- Street trees are located within the street scene and around the incidental green spaces.
- Residential properties comprise front gardens with mature vegetation which contributes to a greener character, softening the built form.

Parking

- On plot parking, to the front and to the side of dwellings in private driveways

Details and Materials

- Red brick on many buildings with some use of buff brick
- Occasional use of render, cream or white
- Roof materials are largely dark clay tiles
- White framed casement windows typical of 20th Century residential homes
- Gable fronted and gable sided roofs
- Predominantly natural boundary treatments including mature hedge and grass lawns. Planting is often combined with low brick walls adding variety to the street scene.
- There are some examples of driveways with no boundary treatments which create an urban character along those sections of the street



^Informal, more rural character on Eversley Road



^Natural boundary treatments including mature hedge



^Large setbacks allowing ample space for front parking and grass lawns



^Semi-detached dwellings with front parking



^Use of red brick



^Wide frontage semi-detached units with large courtyard parking

3.5 Site Assessment

Site Description

The Site is located north of School Road, forming a logical extension to the existing settlement. It is bounded by agricultural land to the north and east, School Road and the Coombes Church of England Primary School to the south, and existing residential properties along Cole Lane to the west, as shown in the adjacent plan. The site benefits from a strong landscape framework, with established tree belts along its boundaries, helping to integrate it into the surrounding rural setting while providing a well-defined edge to the village.



^View from the north edge into the site



^Cole Lane Footway to the north west of the site



^View from the east edge towards the north of the site



^View from the site towards east



^View from the west edge towards the north of the site



Access

An access for pedestrians, cycles and vehicles will be provided onto School Road. And a Pedestrian/cycle link is proposed onto Cole Lane.

Arboriculture

The site is characterised by belts of mature and semi-mature trees lining all boundaries. The majority of the trees on and adjacent to the site are native, deciduous specimens with the most commonly found species being English oak and ash. All tree belts feature a dense understorey of scrub, mainly comprised of native species such as hawthorn, holly and hazel.

Landscape

The Site is generally visually well-contained against the edge of Arborfield Cross and the public rights of way on higher ground around Eliss's Hill Farm to the north, due to intervening layers of dense out-grown hedgerows with mature trees (see Photo A). Views are largely confined to glimpses from School Road (see Photo B).

Drainage

The Site is in Flood Zone 1 and has been assessed to have a low potential for flooding for all sources. With the ground sloping down towards the north-western and eastern corners, surface water runoff naturally flows into the ditches around the Site's perimeter.

Topography

The land surface is relatively flat, with no noticeable undulations, rises, or dips. The Site rises slightly from the northeast to southwest.

Heritage

No designated or non-designated heritage assets lie within the Site. The Site's sylvan western boundary, which will not be altered by the proposed scheme, is a positive aspect of easterly outward views from the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area which includes the relocated Grade II war memorial. By virtue of topography, no other parts of the Site can be seen within broader views in relation to the two assets.

The Grade II listed building of Langleypond Farm lies to the east of the Site, alongside its associated outbuildings which have been identified as non-designated heritage assets by the council. Accounting for the nature, level and extent of the assets' architectural and historic interests, a very small part of the Site around the access from School Road, makes a very low positive contribution to the significance of the Grade II listed Langelypond Farmhouse and outbuildings.

Ecology

The site is characterised by an agricultural fields which supports an improved grassland community. The fields are lineated by hedgerows, some of which are mature with a moderate species richness.

Surveys to date have identified a population of reptiles including grass snakes, a moderate assemblage of bats and numerous common widespread bird species.



^Photo A - Out-grown hedgerows with mature trees around site boundary



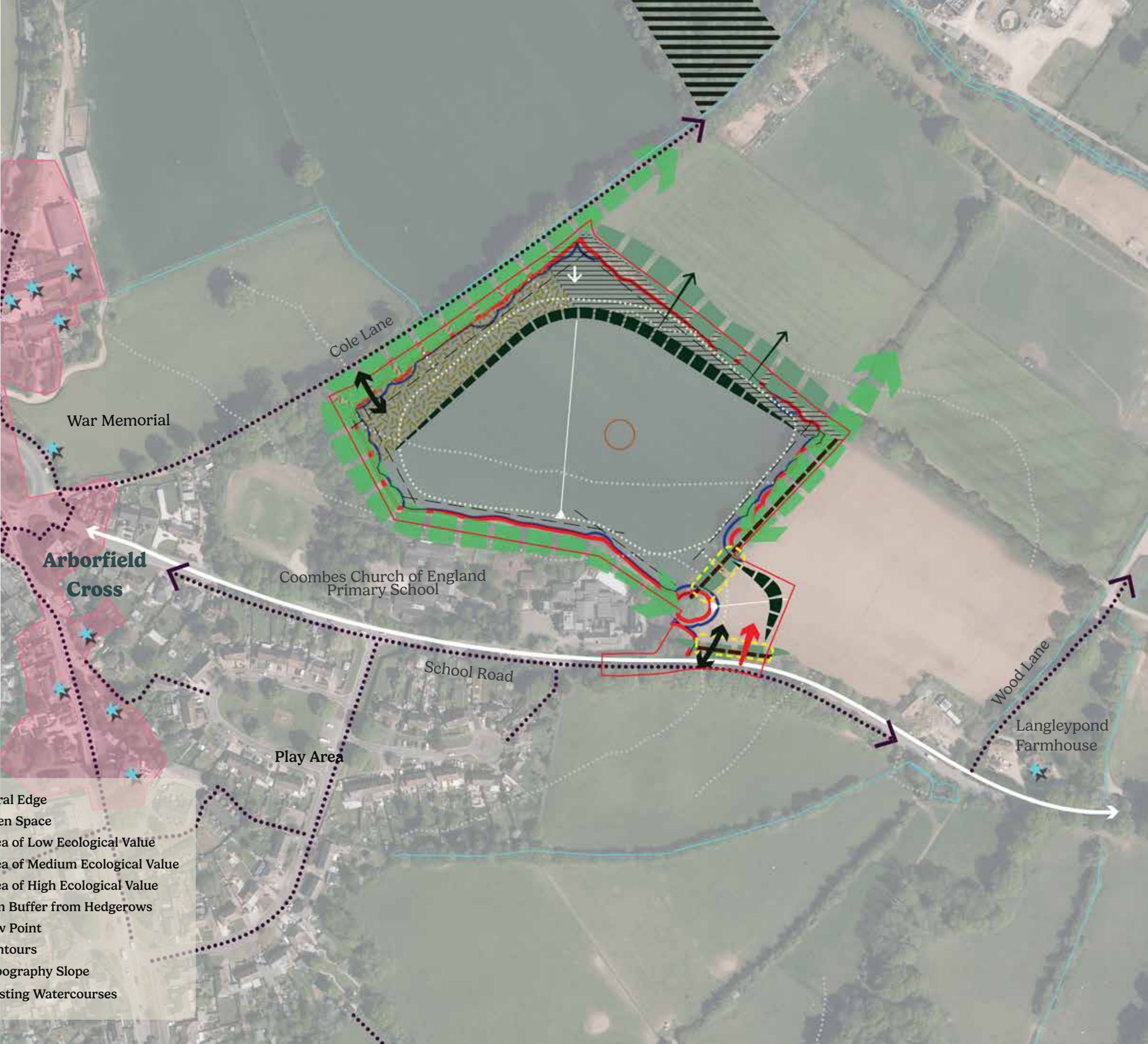
^Photo B - Limited views in to the site from School Road



^Photo C - View from School Road adjacent to The Coombes Primary School

3.6 Site Opportunities

- Main Access to be taken from School Road.
- Increased permeability by linking to the existing and proposed active travel network.
- Enhance and retain existing hedgerows and trees, using existing gaps in the tree line to access the Site.
- Create green buffers to screen views to wider countryside, preserving the rural character of the village.
- Create habitats within the Site and green buffers to help achieving Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Drainage features to be located at the lowest points of the Site.
- Create robust boundary between proposed development and wider countryside on northern edge of Site.

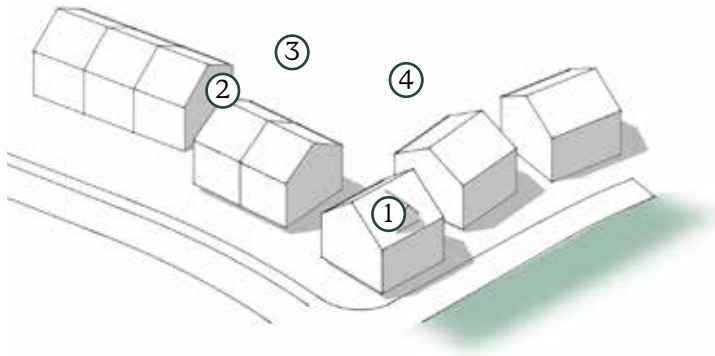


3.7 Design Cues

The analysis of the existing built environment of Arborfield Cross has provided inspiration and will help to create a locally appropriate development, making sure that the development integrates and responds to the grain of the rural village setting. Key summary of design cues are set out below.

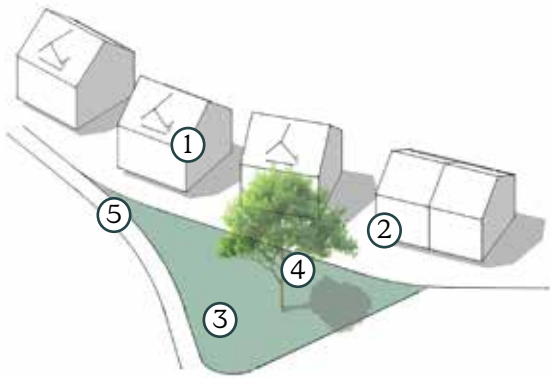
Urban Form & Built /Plot Form

- ① Variation in character from more urban to more rural in response to landscape context and street type.
- ② Subtle variations in setbacks.
- ③ Mix of short terraces, detached and semi-detached buildings, based on the variation in character from urban to rural.
- ④ Relatively low density development with building heights to be generally 2-storey.



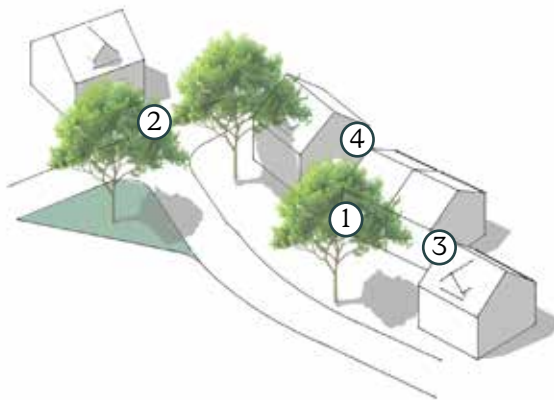
Public Realm and Open Space

- ① Development shaped by the landscape rural context.
- ② Areas of open space overlooked by dwellings.
- ③ Green spaces within the built form.
- ④ Street trees within the built form to create attractive and healthy places.
- ⑤ Accessible public open spaces to enhance sense of community and well-being of residents.



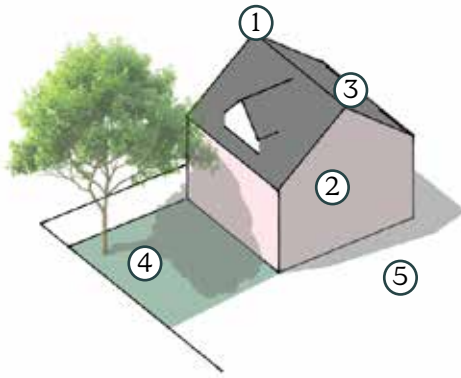
Streets and Parking

- ① Street trees along main streets supporting biodiversity, climate resilience and creating a green and attractive setting for homes.
- ② Key spaces / nodal points along streets to create interest in the street scene. Key spaces to be overlooked.
- ③ Varied setbacks to add variety to the street scene.
- ④ On-plot parking mainly located to the side and front of dwellings.



Details and Materials

- ① Simple, traditional building form.
- ② Predominately red brick with some use of buff brick and white/cream render on key buildings in response to the local built form.
- ③ Roof materials are a mix of dark clay plain tile.
- ④ Green boundary treatments aid to the creation of a green neighborhood that is sympathetic to its surrounding landscape context.
- ⑤ In general, details and materials to respond to the granularity of Arborfield Cross.





4. Engagement



The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) accompanied the previous application across both the eastern and western parcels, it was created in September 2024. As the SCI confirms, residents were extensively consulted and feedback was taken on board in drafting the final proposals for submission. Following the refusal of the original application a revised application has now been prepared, which this SCI also supports.

The nature of the comments received from Wokingham Borough Council mean that the major difference between the two applications is the removal of development on the eastern parcel and some alterations to the illustrative masterplan on the western parcel. Given the extent of these changes and the fact that residents have been consulted on a larger scheme previously, it was felt that a specific community consultation event was not required for this revised application. The scheme is considered to have been simply reduced rather than significantly amended and residents will therefore be unlikely to generate comments which differ to those already obtained. Notwithstanding, all residents will have the opportunity to comment on the application once the Wokingham Borough Council commences the consultation period.

^Consultation Website

^Consultation Boards

5. Design Proposals

Local Placemaking



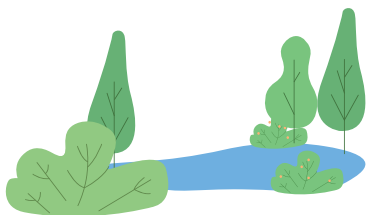
- Good quality homes and buildings that provide an attractive and comfortable place for people to live, work and play.
- The creation of a new neighbourhood that responds to the local character and feels rural.
- A permeable network of interconnected and attractive streets that make it easy to move around.
- Recognisable streets and spaces including vibrant squares and high-quality green space.
- A variety of public open space to serve the needs of all.
- Beautiful and safe streets that encourage neighbourliness making it easy for social encounters.



Nature



- A central green space provides a focal point for recreation and biodiversity, complemented by a network of open spaces, woodlands, and green corridors.
- Sustainable drainage features, including attenuation ponds, swales, and rain gardens naturally manage surface water while enhancing the landscape.
- Well-maintained green links, shaped by existing hedgerows and wooded areas, create a permeable and naturalistic transition between built form and countryside, ensuring a strong landscape framework that preserves Arborfield Cross's distinctive semi-rural identity.



Sustainability



- The vision and proposed illustrative masterplan has made allowances for the energy infrastructure required for a development of this size.
- Well-designed and oriented buildings make the most of passive design strategies to minimise overheating, aid solar gain and achieve internal comfort.
- Reducing water consumption is important for people, nature and the economy. Water efficient homes comprising water efficient shower heads, taps, toilets and appliances contribute towards climate change adaptation.
- Design elements to encourage urban cooling. Vegetation and green spaces will permeate every part of the new settlement, providing shade and helping cool the surrounding air temperature.



Active Travel



- Convenient, comfortable and accessible walking and cycling routes throughout the site, including existing PRoWs, will support active travel choices, making car-free journeys the first choice for residents. These routes will provide direct links to public transport connections.
- Proposed footpaths and cycleways will connect with the existing public rights of way network and linking the scheme with facilities available within Arborfield Cross and the surrounding area including links to the countryside and areas of public open space.



5.1 Concept Masterplan

- ① Main access to be taken from School Road, ensuring safe and efficient vehicular movement.
- ② A central green space provides a focal point for recreation and biodiversity, enhancing the landscape-led approach.
- ③ Improved permeability through a well-defined network of pedestrian and cycle routes, linking seamlessly with the existing active travel network.
- ④ Retention and enhancement of existing hedgerows and trees, reinforcing green corridors and maintaining the site's rural character.
- ⑤ Creation of new habitats and green buffers, contributing to a 34.48% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).
- ⑥ Drainage features positioned at the lowest points of the site, integrating sustainable urban drainage (SuDS) to manage surface water naturally.
- ⑦ Strategic open space placement along the northern edge to provide a robust landscape buffer, maintaining separation from the wider countryside.
- ⑧ New tree planting throughout to enhance biodiversity, improve microclimate, and create a strong landscape structure.
- ⑨ A key building positioned centrally to act as an arrival feature, reinforcing legibility and placemaking.
- ⑩ Pedestrian and cycle connection to Cole Lane, ensuring active travel links while maintaining potential for emergency access.



5.2 Illustrative Masterplan

The Illustrative Masterplan outlines the arrangement of buildings, plots, gardens, parking, open space, and streets, providing a visual representation of how the site could be developed. It is important to note that this plan is purely illustrative and represents one possible approach to delivering the site.

Our approach ensures the development integrates generous garden sizes, aligning with local design guidance and reinforcing the semi-rural character of Arborfield Cross. The central green space, well-designed open areas, and green corridors enhance biodiversity, recreation, and landscape structure, ensuring a well-connected, open environment that integrates seamlessly with its surroundings.

Through a detailed context analysis, community engagement, and strong design principles, this site presents an opportunity to deliver a high-quality neighbourhood that complements the village's rural identity.

- ① Areas of open space overlooked by dwellings.
- ② Tree lined streets within the built form.
- ③ Relatively low density development.
- ④ Accessible play area within high-quality green space.
- ⑤ Ped/cycle link onto Cole Lane for potential access point.
- ⑥ Community Orchard
- ⑦ Proposed Pumping Station



5.3 Density & Gardens Size

The proposed development at Land North of School Road has been carefully refined in response to feedback, ensuring it aligns with local and national design guidance while reinforcing the semi-rural character of Arborfield Cross. The layout now integrates a central green space, enhances separation distances, and strengthens landscape buffers, creating a spacious and well-connected neighbourhood.

- **Balanced Density:** The development achieves 25 dwellings per hectare (dph)—consistent with existing areas of Arborfield Cross—ensuring it fits naturally within the village's settlement pattern.
- **Generous Gardens & Open Spaces:** Each home benefits from a minimum garden depth of 11m, complemented by a centrally located green space that provides accessible recreational areas, enhancing community interaction and well-being.
- **Enhanced Privacy & Separation Distances:** The minimum back-to-back distance of 24m exceeds the 22m local standard, ensuring privacy and a well-spaced layout.
- **Sensitive Low-Density Edges:** Lower densities of 19-21 dph at the site's edges create larger gardens, soft transitions to the countryside, and a natural village extension.
- **Considered Approach to School Boundary:** The proposed homes backing onto The Coombes Primary School have been designed with enhanced rear garden depths and additional planting to ensure a sensitive relationship with the school grounds. This approach maintains privacy for both future residents and school users while creating a well-integrated and secure boundary.



5.4 Visualisation

The visual representation above demonstrates how the proposed development at Land North of School Road is sensitively integrated into the existing fabric of Arborfield Cross, respecting the village's character, scale, and rural setting while enhancing access to high-quality public open space (POS) for new and existing residents.

- **Seamless Integration with the Village:** The layout follows the existing settlement pattern, with a centrally located green space creating a focal point while maintaining a clear separation from the countryside through green buffers and retained mature trees.
- **Reinforcing Rural Character:** A higher proportion of detached homes complement the existing mix of semi-detached and terraced housing, ensuring a balanced and varied streetscape.
- **Well-Defined Green Boundaries:** Woodland, hedgerows, and open spaces soften the development edges, minimising visual impact and enhancing biodiversity net gain.
- **Accessible Public Open Space:** The central green space, alongside play areas and green corridors, ensures that all residents benefit from immediate access to shared recreational space
- **A Landscape-Led Approach:** Tree-lined streets, pedestrian-friendly routes, and sustainable drainage features strengthen connectivity, walkability, and biodiversity, ensuring the development feels like a natural and well-integrated village extension.



5.5 Green Infrastructure

Landscape

The Landscape Strategy Plan shows how a sensitive landscape-led development can be delivered to make provision for new landscaping, open space, recreation and play.

There will be a robust boundary between the proposed housing and the countryside to the north. Planting will be of native species and will include a high proportion of English Oak. Ornamental street trees will define the main routes through. Any hedgerow removal required to accommodate the new access from School Road will be offset with new hedgerow and tree planting at the site entrance.

Sustainable Drainage Systems are proposed for the lower ground to the north west of the site. These will be seeded with wildflower grassland seed mix to provide floral interest, additional habitat and seasonal interest.

A new Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) will be provided near the middle of the Site. The equipment will be of timber with a naturalistic character, to suit the edge-of-settlement location. Trim trail stations can be installed alongside the recreational routes to the western and northern boundaries of the Site providing exercise opportunities for adults and teens. A Community Orchard is proposed towards the north-east corner of the Site. The orchard will also contribute to Biodiversity Net Gain.

Recreational walking routes will be created within the Site to promote healthy living.

Heritage

Overall, the proposed scheme will have a neutral impact upon the significance of heritage assets, including the contribution made by their settings..

Ecology

From the onset the scheme has sought to retain the features of ecological value through careful design. The majority of the hedgerows in and around the site retained, save for two small areas that need to be removed for the access roads. This will ensure the ecological permeability of the green infrastructure is maintained.

Several areas within the site have been given over to habitat creation, with a significant area to the east being used for wildflower meadow and scrub creation, with further areas to the west also. New native trees will be planted in appropriate locations throughout the site to ensure that the maximum biodiversity gain for the site is achieved.

Additional enhancements will also be introduced through the installation of appropriate bat and bird boxes in suitable locations around the site, as well as the inclusion of hedgehog gates in fences.



^ Precedent images - Basin



^ Precedent images - Trim Trail station

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environmental

5.6 Drainage Strategy

- **Integrated Sustainable Drainage (SuDS):** The scheme incorporates swales, rain gardens, and an attenuation basin to manage surface water effectively.
- **Attenuation Basin:** A potential basin is located at the lowest point of the site to collect and slow water runoff, reducing flood risk.
- **Swales & Rain Gardens:** Positioned throughout the site to naturally filter and manage surface water while enhancing biodiversity.
- **Permeable Surfaces:** Key pedestrian and cycle routes use permeable materials to reduce surface water runoff and improve infiltration.
- **Landscape-Led Approach:** The drainage strategy integrates seamlessly with the green infrastructure, enhancing the rural setting and biodiversity net gain.



^ Precedent images - Basin



5.7 Access & Movement

A pedestrian and cycle access will be provided onto Cole Lane in the western corner of the site to increase the permeability of the site by active modes of travel. This access will be a minimum of 3m wide in accordance with Local Transport Note 1/20 requirements for a shared cycle/ footway.

Additionally, an access for pedestrians, cycles and vehicles will be provided onto School Road. To achieve this, School Road will be realigned to prioritise movements into the site in the context of the existing flows on School Road and the existing vehicle prohibition to the east.

The proposals have been developed in accordance with a Tertiary Street in Wokingham Borough Council's "highway design guide for developers" and in the context of Manual for Streets (2007). As such, visibility splays of 2.4m X 25m have been provided from the proposed priority junction, and 25m of forward visibility has been provided to the proposed pedestrian crossing in accordance with a 20mph design speed.

The proposals seek to redesign two elements of the existing traffic calming scheme on School Road to provide a less engineered environment. A chicane will be introduced to replace the existing speed cushions adjacent to the school enabling soft landscaping on School Road in the context of its Green Route classification. Additionally, the existing one-way working element will be replaced by a raised junction at the entrance to the site.

To determine requirements for localised widening of the carriageway a swept path analysis has been undertaken to demonstrate that a refuse vehicle to pass a large car, which is considered suitable given the scale of the proposals.



5.8 Access Visual

- **Sensitive Integration with Existing Green Route:** The access has been designed to retain as much of the existing tree cover as possible, with only minimal clearance required to accommodate visibility splays and vehicle movements.
- **Minimising Visual Impact:** The access design carefully follows the natural alignment of the road, ensuring that it blends seamlessly with the surrounding landscape rather than creating a stark engineered feature
- **Prioritising Pedestrians & Cyclists:** A dedicated pedestrian and cycle access onto Cole Lane improves connectivity while maintaining the integrity of the tree-lined edge. The 3m-wide shared route aligns with best practice for active travel.
- **Maintaining the Enclosed Character of the Road:** The curved alignment and retained vegetation ensure the view remains framed by trees, preserving the sense of enclosure and minimising any perception of urbanisation.
- **Subtle Junction Design:** The priority junction is designed in line with Wokingham's Highway Design Guide, incorporating visibility splays without unnecessary widening, ensuring a balanced relationship between function and landscape character.



5.9 How do our design proposals respond to National and Local Guidance?

The revised proposal for Land North of School Road has been carefully developed in alignment with key planning and design guidance, including the Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location (SDL) Supplementary Planning Document (2011, WBC), the National Design Guide (NDG), the Arborfield & Newland Village Design Statement (VDS), and the Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan. These documents have shaped the masterplan to ensure a high-quality, sustainable, and well-integrated development that complements the existing character of Arborfield Cross.

By responding directly to previous feedback, the revised scheme strengthens village character, enhances green infrastructure, and improves connectivity, ensuring a balanced and sensitive extension to the village.

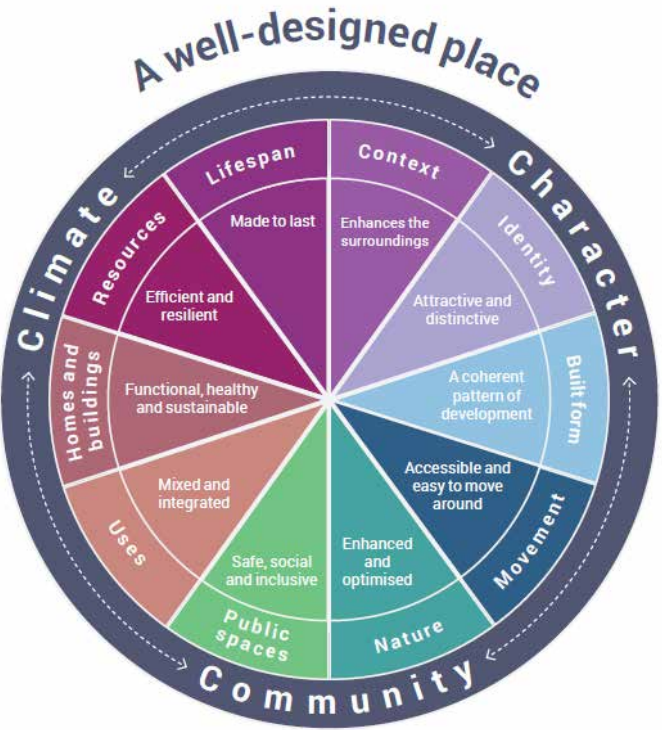
Key Design Principles

- **High-Quality Homes & Rural Character:** The development delivers well-proportioned homes using traditional materials such as local red brick, reinforcing the semi-rural identity of Arborfield Cross.
- **Landscape-Led Approach:** Generous open spaces, retained vegetation, and green corridors ensure a soft transition between the built environment and surrounding countryside, in line with VDS guidance.

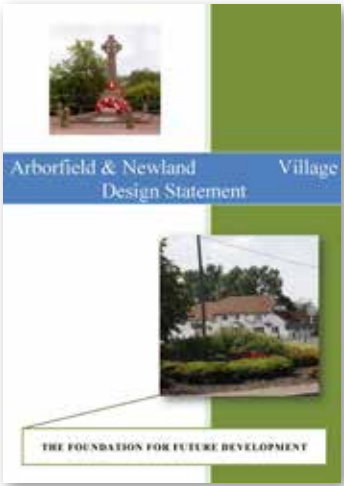
- **Sustainable Street Network:** A well-connected, walkable layout prioritises pedestrian and cycle-friendly routes, supporting active travel and enhancing integration with the village.
- **Public Open Space & Green Infrastructure:** Accessible green spaces, play areas, and a community orchard provide a diverse and inclusive outdoor environment while delivering biodiversity net gain.
- **Strong Environmental Strategy:** The scheme incorporates attenuation ponds, SuDS, passive design, urban cooling measures, and water efficiency features, ensuring long-term sustainability and climate resilience.
- **Enhanced Connectivity:** The development links seamlessly to existing Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) and key local routes, ensuring easy access to local facilities and open spaces.

By embedding these policy-led design principles, this proposal delivers a well-integrated, attractive, and sustainable neighbourhood, creating an exceptional place to live while preserving the village's character.

- **Context** – enhances the surroundings.
- **Identity** – attractive and distinctive.
- **Built form** – a coherent pattern of development.
- **Movement** – accessible and easy to move around.
- **Nature** – enhanced and optimised.
- **Public spaces** – safe, social and inclusive.
- **Uses** – mixed and integrated.
- **Homes and buildings** – functional, healthy and sustainable.
- **Resources** – efficient and resilient.
- **Lifespan** – made to last.



‘The ten characteristics of well-designed places’ diagram NDG



5.10 Summary

The revised proposal for Land North of School Road takes a thoughtful and responsive approach, incorporating feedback from the previous application to create a well-integrated neighbourhood that respects the character of Arborfield Cross. Key updates include a centrally located green space, stronger landscape buffers, and an improved access strategy. These refinements ensure the development blends naturally with its surroundings while enhancing local connectivity and green infrastructure.

Our focus remains on high-quality placemaking, delivering new homes in a sustainable and sensitive manner while exceeding national design and environmental standards. At Arborfield Cross, we have achieved 34.48% BNG, reinforcing our dedication to enhancing local ecology and green infrastructure.

This DAS outlines the refinements made, ensuring the development is landscape-led, well-connected, and designed to support community wellbeing, providing a strong foundation for its future evolution.



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