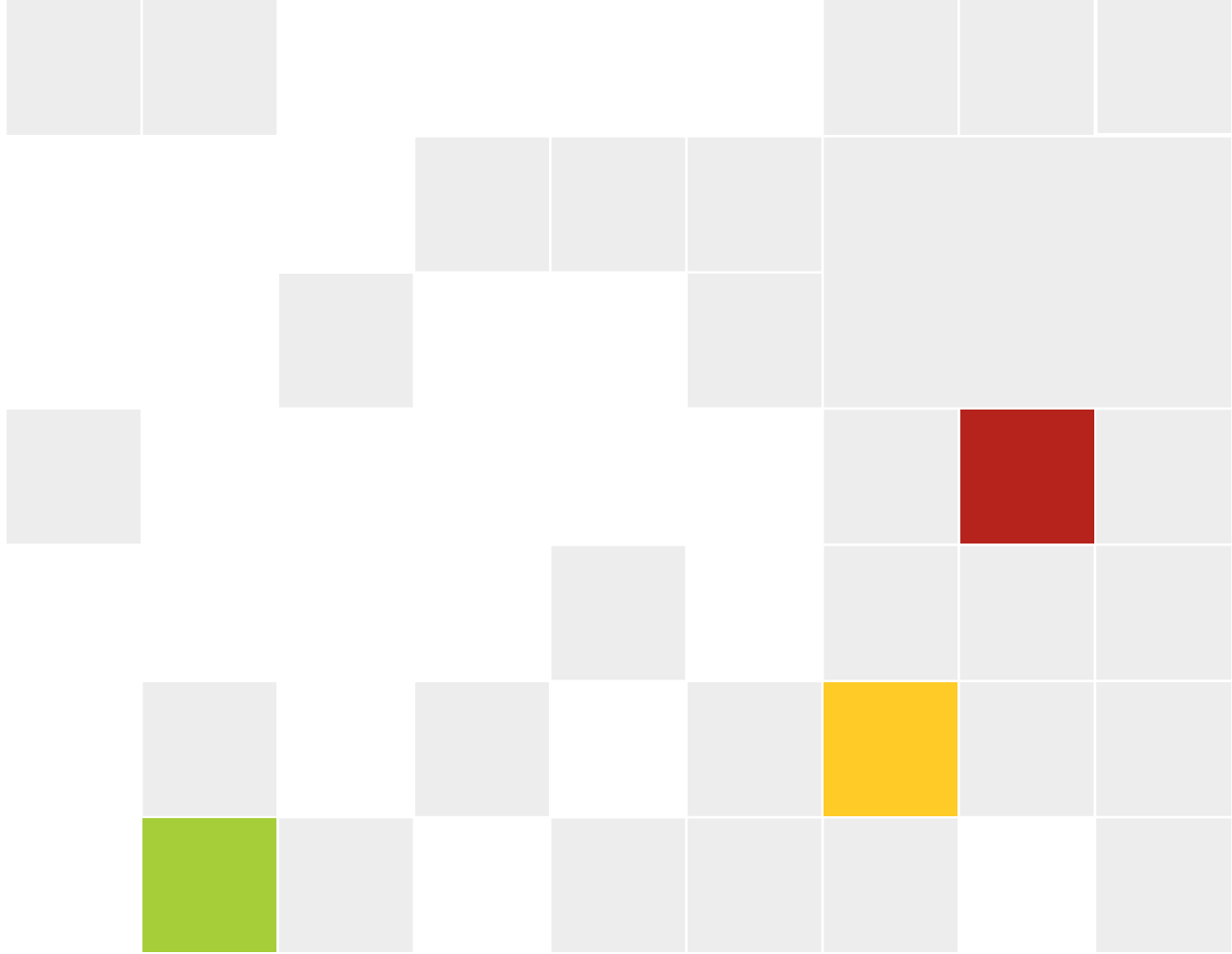
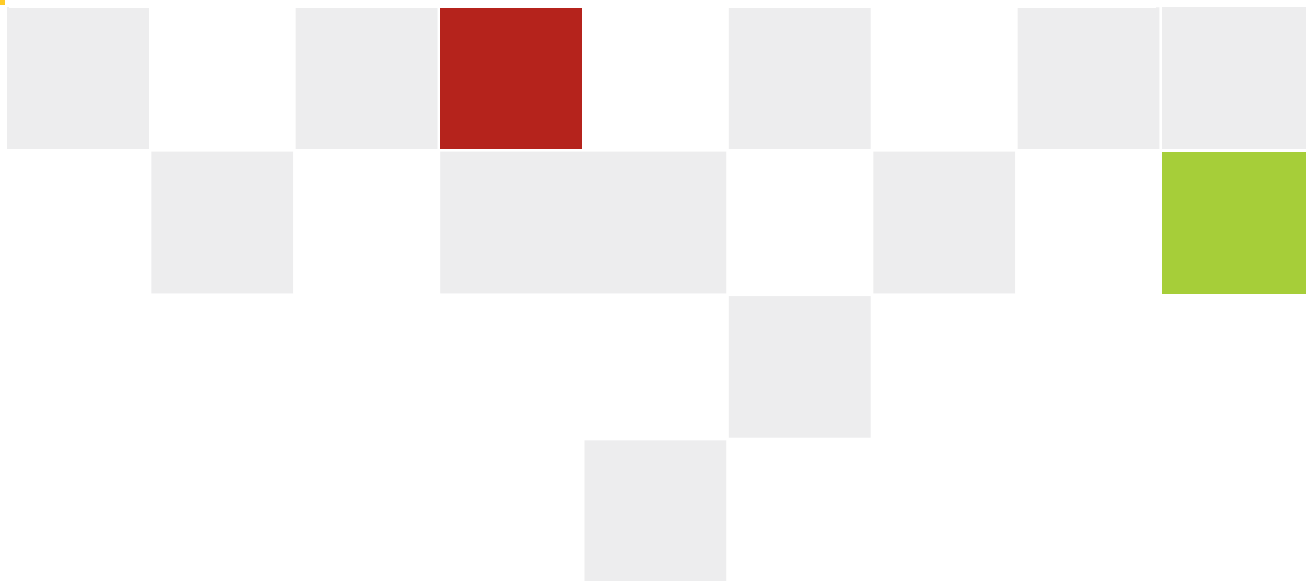




Parcel 8, Hogwood Farm, Sheerlands Road, Finchampstead



Affordable Housing Need Assessment



Boyer

Report Control

Project:	Parcel 8, Hogwood Farm, Sheerlands Road, Finchampstead
Client:	Barratt David Wilson Southern Counties
Reference:	23.1026
File Origin:	https://lrgcouk.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/BoyerSP/Eb3RDVYDGKVAIOOuTsfSb5sB_rf_ZMgII7WJCqlUXIz-7A?e=sRqzG5
Primary Author	Daniel Gresswell-Nunn
Checked By:	Stuart Crickett

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Checked By</i>
01	10/05/2023	Draft	Stuart Crickett
02	13/06/2023	Final	Stuart Crickett
03 (Rev.A)	04/01/2024	Revision 1	Stuart Crickett
04 (Rev.B)	15/01/2024	Revision 2	Stuart Crickett

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan

Appendix 2 – Freedom of Information Response

Appendix 3 – Finchampstead South Ward Area

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Boyer has prepared this Affordable Housing Need Assessment ('ANHA') on behalf of Barratt David Wilson Southern Counties ('BDW'). The AHNA examines the context and extent of need for affordable housing within the Wokingham Borough Council ('WBC') administrative area. The AHNA further examines the local need for affordable housing specifically in the Finchampstead South Ward, in which Parcel 8, Hogwood Farm ('the application site' or 'the site') is located.

1.2 The AHNA has been prepared to assist in the determination of a Reserved Matters ('RM') planning application for Parcel 8 of the development pursuant to the approval of the minor material amendment (Section 73) application (Ref. 181194) which varied the hybrid planning application (Ref. O/2014/2179 and 140674) for land at Hogwood Farm, Sheerlands Road, Finchampstead, Wokingham ('the site').

1.3 The description of development for Parcel 8, as set out on the application form, is as follows:

Application for approval of Reserved Matters pursuant to Outline Planning Consent O/2014/2179 (as varied by 181194, dated 14/11/2018). The Reserved Matters comprise details of 40 dwellings across Parcel P8 with access via Wheat Road, associated internal roads, provision of Public Open Space, together with parking, cycleways, footpaths, landscaping and sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS). Details of access, appearance, layout, scale and landscape to be considered.

1.4 The proposed development includes provision for 35% on-site affordable housing, in compliance with the Hybrid Permission (Ref. 181194) and the requirements of adopted Policies CP5: Housing mix, density and affordability in the Core Strategy (2010), and TB05: Housing Mix in the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014).

1.5 The proposed tenure split is 50% Social Rent, 7% Affordable Rent, and 43% Shared Ownership. In isolation, the proposed mix does not fully align with the approved *Affordable Housing Scheme* for the Hogwood development. However, the actual divergence relates to just 2 dwellings and, in combination with the tenure mix approved and delivered across Parcels 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 14, and 15 to date, aligns well with adopted / approved requirements.

1.6 In this AHNA, account is given to a wide range of national and local housing affordability indicators. Alongside consideration of local and national planning policy, the Council's own corporate objectives, and the performance of affordable and general housing delivery against the adopted Development Plan's requirements and objectively assessed needs.

1.7 In some areas of the analysis, reliance has been placed upon data obtained through a Freedom of Information ('Fol') request, which was submitted to Wokingham Borough Council ('WBC') on 24 April 2023. The Council initially responded to the Fol request on 24th May 2023, before providing additional information on 31st May 2023. The Council's full set of responses to the Fol request are provided at **Appendix 2 – Freedom of Information Response**.

- 1.8 The Statement sets out the assessment of affordable housing need over the following sections:
- **Section 2:** Reviews relevant Development Plan policies and other material considerations pertinent to the site;
 - **Section 3:** Reviews relevant housing affordability indicators
 - **Section 4:** Provides analysis of affordable housing needs;
 - **Section 5:** Examines past affordable housing delivery performance; and
 - **Section 6:** Sets out the Statement's conclusions and recommendations.
- 1.9 Our analysis establishes an understanding and makes an assessment of the need for affordable housing within Wokingham Borough. It also makes an assessment of the contribution toward meeting this need that would arise from the proposed development.
- 1.10 The AHNA concludes **there is an acute need for affordable housing in the Borough; and that this Reserved Matters application, albeit in isolation of limited scale, will nonetheless make a valuable contribution to addressing the Borough's affordable housing needs.**

2. DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND RELEVANT POLICIES

Introduction

- 2.1 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)¹, planning applications must be determined in accordance with the relevant Development Plan for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 2.2 The adopted Development Plan for Wokingham Borough Council comprises the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted 2010), the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (adopted 2014), saved policy NRM6 of the South East Plan (2009), and the Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan (adopted 2023).
- 2.3 The Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan was formally 'made' (adopted) by Wokingham Borough Council on 21 September 2023. The Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan does not include any policies that specifically relate to the delivery of affordable housing.
- 2.4 Other material considerations that are relevant to the determination of the planning application comprise the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (December 2023), Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG'), the emerging Future Wokingham Borough Local Plan (2020 – 2037), and several of the Council's corporate documents.

Development Plan

Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2010)²

- 2.5 The Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy ('the Core Strategy') was adopted in January 2010 and sets out the planning policies for the Borough over the 20-year period 2006 to 2026.
- 2.6 Notwithstanding its statutory weight, the Core Strategy is over five years old and pre-dates the publication of the first NPPF in 2012. In accordance with paragraph 225 of the NPPF (December 2023), the Core Strategy's policies attract varying degrees of weight depending on their consistency with the NPPF.
- 2.7 Section 2 of the Core Strategy sets out the spatial context of Wokingham Borough. In particular, paragraph 2.38 recognises that '*...the delivery of affordable housing is a key priority for the area, particularly having regard to the findings of the Berkshire HMA. The HMA indicates that at least 64% of annual dwelling completions should be of affordable units*'.

¹ Available online at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/section/38>.

² Available online at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-information/local-plan-and-planning-policies/>.

- 2.8 Paragraph 2.68 identifies fifteen aspirations and spatial issues for the Borough that need to be addressed by the Core Strategy. Of these key spatial issues, one comprises ensuring that the Core Strategy '*...delivers affordable housing that meets identified local needs*'.
- 2.9 In setting out the Spatial Vision for Wokingham Borough, a key commitment comprises that '*By 2026, this Core Strategy will deliver the development necessary to sustain the area's economic growth and ensure the needs of all groups including children, the young, the elderly and the vulnerable have been met*'. Paragraph 3.5 sets out that this includes that '*...the social needs of residents will have been met, including the provision of affordable housing*'.
- 2.10 Policy CP5: Housing mix, density and affordability provides that '*Planning permission will be granted for residential development providing a mix and balance of densities, dwelling types, tenures and sizes*'. Furthermore, the policy confirms that, subject to viability, the minimum percentage of affordable housing sought on greenfield land within Major Development Locations, on sites of 5 dwellings (net) or more, is 35%.
- 2.11 The policy recognises that '*...the Council will negotiate the tenure, size and type of affordable units on a site by site basis having regard to housing needs, site specifics and other factors*'.
- 2.12 Supporting text to the Policy clarifies '*...the provision of a variety of types and sizes of accommodation is desirable across the borough, so that the housing needs of as many households as possible can be met. This helps to ensure that the Plan is sustainable in meeting the housing needs of the community... **Depending upon the character and needs of the area, it may not be necessary to include a mix of dwellings in every residential scheme***' (emphasis added).
- 2.13 Paragraph 4.32 confirms '*...the provision of affordable housing is based upon a 70:30 split between social rent and shared ownership as detailed in the Affordable Housing Viability Study. **The Council will use this split as the starting point for negotiations on affordable housing but apply flexibility where there are viability and other site specific issues***' (emphasis added).
- 2.14 Paragraph 4.31 confirms that there is an '*exceptional need for affordable housing in the Borough*'. Paragraph 4.34 further '*...recognises the exceptional need for affordable housing within the borough as highlighted in the Berkshire HMA*'. As clarified in Paragraph 4.34, the HMA '*...indicates that between 64% and 88% of the Borough's annual housing completions would need to be affordable dwellings*' if objectively assessed affordable housing needs were to be met in full.
- 2.15 Paragraph 4.35 confirms that; '*...in recognition of the changing needs and demographics within the Borough, larger developments (including SDL) should provide a range of different sizes and types of housing, which address these needs across all tenures*' (emphasis added).

*Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014)*³

- 2.16 The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014) ('MDD') was adopted on 21 February 2014. It provides additional detail to the policies within the Core Strategy (2010).
- 2.17 Section 1 of the MDD provides a summary of the document. Thirteen key policy objectives are set out at paragraph 1.11, which clarifies that one of the document's principal objectives is to *'Deliver affordable housing that meets identified local needs'*.
- 2.18 Policy TB05: Housing Mix clarifies that *'...proposals for residential development shall provide for an appropriate housing mix which reflects a balance between the underlying character of the area and both the current and projected needs of households'* (emphasis added). The policy further clarifies that *'...any scheme that requires the provision of affordable housing should provide an appropriate mix of accommodation on a site by site basis, which reflects the Council's Housing Strategy and the Affordable Housing SPD'*.
- 2.19 Supporting text to the policy, at paragraph 3.22, sets out that *'...to sustain mixed communities, developers should bring forward proposals for market housing which reflect the demand and the demographic profile of households requiring market housing'*.
- 2.20 Paragraph 3.23 highlights that *'...where affordable housing is provided under policy CP5 of the Core Strategy, this should reflect the size and type of affordable housing required. **The Council's Housing Strategy (2010), which will be regularly reviewed depending on need, indicates at page 8 that 'as a guide' based on current needs information the Council will aim to achieve the following mix** of houses/flats:*
- i) 20% 1-bedroom dwellings*
 - ii) 45% 2-bedroom dwellings (which would predominantly be houses)*
 - iii) 20% 3-bedroom houses (to include some 3-bedroom bungalows for people with physical disabilities)*
 - iv) 15% 4-bedroom + houses' (emphasis added).*
- 2.21 The Council's most recently published Housing Strategy (2020 – 2024) does not include reference to the appropriate mix of affordable housing required in the Borough.

³ Available online at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-information/local-plan-and-planning-policies/>.

Other Material Considerations

Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document ('AHSPD') (2013)⁴

- 2.22 The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document ('AHSPD') was adopted in July 2013 and sets out in detail WBC's approach to the implementation of Policy CP5 in the adopted Core Strategy (2010).
- 2.23 Central to the purposes of the AHSPD is the objective to '*...facilitate the delivery of affordable housing to meet housing needs*'. To achieve this, the AHSPD drew on a range of other assessments of affordable housing needs, including the Wokingham Borough Housing Strategy, the Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, and the Housing Needs Assessment (many of these have since been superseded and their replacement documents are considered below).
- 2.24 Paragraph 7.1 advises that '*...all proposals will be considered on a site-by-site basis*'. However, '*...as a guide, the Council will aim to achieve the following mix of sizes overall for affordable housing in development proposals*':
- 20% 1 bedroom flats and houses,
 - 15% 2 bedroom flats,
 - 30% 2 bedroom houses,
 - 20% 3 bedroom houses (to include some 3-bedroom bungalows for families with physical disabilities),
 - 15% 4 plus bedroom houses'.
- 2.25 Paragraph 8.2 clarifies that: '*...affordable housing provision will include a mix of social rent, affordable rent and shared ownership housing. Based on needs evidence, Affordable Rent should not typically account for more than 12% of the Affordable Housing*'.
- 2.26 The relevance of the AHSPD to contemporary affordable housing need should be considered, given that the document was adopted in 2013, some 10 years ago. Furthermore, the evidence which was relied upon to inform its analysis pre-dated this by some 1 to 11 years, including assessments ranging between 2002 and 2012.

⁴ Available online at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-information/supplementary-planning-guidance-and-documents/>.

Hybrid Outline Application (Ref. O/20142179 and 140674)

- 2.27 Planning permission was granted in January 2017 (refs. O/2014/2179 and 140674) for a hybrid application comprising:

'PART 1 – 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 sqm of employment floor space (Use Class B2); a Neighbourhood Centre with up to 1,900 sqm of non-residential floorspace (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).'

- 2.28 For clarification, due to Wokingham Borough Council revising their application referencing system, the application has two reference numbers.

Minor Material Amendment Application (Ref. 181194)

- 2.29 Following the grant of the hybrid permission in January 2017, a Minor Material Amendment (Section 73) application (Ref. 181194) was submitted. This sought to revise the approved parameter plans and provide additional technical information. This application also sought to amend sixteen planning conditions to reflect the new drawing and report references.
- 2.30 Planning consent for the Section 73 application was granted in November 2018.
- 2.31 The application site falls within the broader Hogwood Farm site, which benefits from the permission(s) described above. Consequently, the parameters of the Hybrid Permission(s) are pertinent to the application for Reserved Matters approval.
- 2.32 The Section 106 legal agreement pertaining to the development required the submission of an 'Affordable Housing Scheme' prior to or concurrently with the first Reserved Matters application. An 'Affordable Housing Scheme' was submitted to Wokingham Borough Council on 23/05/2018, which was reviewed and found acceptable by the Council.
- 2.33 The agreed Affordable Housing Scheme provides that (in summary):
- 35% affordable housing delivery will be provided on-site overall,
 - each Reserved Matters application will seek to deliver 35% affordable housing,
 - details of location, form and tenure of affordable housing for each Phase will be agreed through relevant Reserved Matters applications separately, and
 - each Phase will seek to deliver approximately 58% social rent, 12% affordable rent, and 30% shared ownership.

- 2.34 To date, eight parcels have received Reserved Matters permission within the Hogwood site. The cumulative approved housing mix under Parcels 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 14 and 15 is shown below:

Table 1: Summary of Reserved Matters Permissions to Date (as at 05/01/2024)

Type	Size	Market	Affordable	% of Total Affordable	Total Dwellings
Apartments	1 bed	45	94	30%	139
	2 bed	35	69	22%	104
Houses	1 bed	0	12	4%	12
	2 bed	111	61	20%	172
	3 bed	239	60	19%	299
	4+ bed	147	13	4%	160
Total		577	309	100%	886

Wokingham Local Housing Needs Assessment (2020)⁵

- 2.35 The Wokingham Local Housing Needs Assessment (2020) ('LHNA') presents an assessment of housing needs within the Borough over the 18-year period 2018 – 2036. The LHNA forms a key element of the evidence-base supporting the preparation of the emerging draft Local Plan Update. The LHNA represents the most recently published objective assessment for housing need in the Borough.
- 2.36 The LHNA concludes that the overall need for affordable housing would comprise a total of '...7,329 dwellings over the 18-year period 2018-2036, equivalent to an average of 403 households or 407 dwellings per annum'. This represents a substantial proportion of the overall minimum Local Housing Need figure of 804 dwellings⁶ (~51%).

⁵ Available online at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-information/draft-local-plan-consultation/?categoryesctl91f252ff-550d-4cfa-a838-92ef2cb5f83c=10728>.

⁶ As it stood based on the Standard Method LHN in March 2020 (as of March 2023 the SM LHN now stands slightly lower at 795dpa). As such, affordable Housing need of 407 per annum would remain 51% of the Borough's total housing need as derived through the Standard Method.

- 2.37 Furthermore, at Figure 42, the LHNA identifies the potential size and tenure mix for Wokingham Borough, which should act as the starting-point for affordable housing provision but will vary on a site-by-site bases. The size and tenure mix proposed comprises:

Table 2: Summary of LHNA Potential Size and Tenure Mix for Wokingham Borough

	Affordable Housing	Market Housing	All Dwellings
1 bedroom	20-25%	5-10%	10%
2 bedrooms	45-50%	5-10%	10%
3 bedrooms	20-25%	40-50%	45%
4+ bedrooms	5-10%	35-40%	35%

Emerging Wokingham Local Plan Update (2018 – 2038)

- 2.38 Wokingham Borough Council is currently undertaking work to prepare a new Local Plan. Progress on the Local Plan Update ('LPU') is ongoing, with the most recent consultation undertaken between November 2021 – January 2022 on a revised 'Regulation 18' 'Revised Growth Strategy' and supporting evidence base documents. At the time of writing, further progress on the LPU has been paused to take account of the Government's recently published update to the national planning policy framework, in December 2023.
- 2.39 The Revised Growth Strategy consultation document sets out a revised spatial strategy, but did not propose to amend the remainder of the draft policies published in the previous Draft Plan Consultation, which took place between February to April 2020.
- 2.40 Paragraph 2.21 of the Draft LPU (2020) clarifies '*...the affordability of housing remains an important issue, particularly for younger residents*'. Indeed, one of the 10 key objectives comprises the need to '*...contribute our fair share towards meeting the need for more housing, ensuring that a range of suitable housing options are available across both towns and villages which cater for and adapt to a variety of needs including affordable housing and the growing ageing and vulnerable groups in the population*' (emphasis added).
- 2.41 Section 7 of the Draft LPU (2020) comprises the emerging plan's housing policies. Paragraph 7.1 confirms that: '*...the local plan will support and work alongside the council's Housing Strategy to; meet the borough's housing needs and in particular the needs of those residents who cannot afford to purchase a suitable property on the open market, improve the quality and sustainability of new and existing housing, tackle rough sleeping and homelessness and ensure that those more vulnerable members of our community have access to suitable housing and support services that enhance their lives and, where appropriate, enable them to live independently within their communities*' (emphasis added).

- 2.42 Draft Policy H5: Affordable Housing provides support for planning applications that provide a *'...mix and balance of densities, dwelling types, tenures and sizes'*. It also requires that *'...affordable housing must reflect the sizes and types that meet the proven needs of people who are not able to compete in the general housing market'* (emphasis added).
- 2.43 Criteria 2 of the draft policy sets out *'...the council will negotiate the tenure, size and type of affordable units on a site by site basis having regard to housing needs, site specifics and other factors'*. Subject to viability considerations, the policy sets out minimum affordable housing percentage requirements for several site typologies, reflecting those in adopted Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy.
- 2.44 Criteria 4 of the policy clarifies that *'...on strategic developments affordable housing should be distributed across the development to create a mixed and balanced community'*.
- 2.45 Supporting text to the policy further sets out : *'Access to affordable, high quality housing is a challenge for people living and working in the borough, and in particular the young, given that they are more likely to be on lower incomes and less able to secure mortgage finance or access the private rental sector. High house prices and rents mean there is a high need for affordable housing and it is a priority for the council to increase the number of affordable homes'* (emphasis added).
- 2.46 At Paragraph 7.35, the Draft LPU (2020) notes *'...the Local Housing Need Assessment (LHNA) has identified an overall need for affordable housing of 7,255 dwellings over the period 2018-2036, equivalent to 403 dwellings per annum'* (emphasis added).
- 2.47 Paragraph 7.41 confirms that *'...in most cases the council will seek a 70:30 split between social rent and shared ownership. This split may be applied flexibly where there are site specific issues, including viability. Other relevant evidence will include information from the Housing Register and the type and tenure of other affordable housing in the local area'*.
- 2.48 However, at Paragraph 7.42, it is clarified that *'...the mix of housing will be considered on a case by case basis, with the latest available information regarding housing mix used as a starting point. There is demand for a variety of unit types and sizes across the borough. The Local Housing Needs Assessment (2020) has highlighted the need for affordable one bedroom flats and two bedroom houses in particular'* (emphasis added).

Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.49 The Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan was formally 'made' (adopted) by Wokingham Borough Council on 21 September 2023. It covers the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Area, in which the site is located.
- 2.50 The Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan does not include any policies that specifically relate to the delivery of affordable housing.

- 2.51 However, the Plan is supported by a Housing Needs Assessment as part of its evidence base, which projects an identified need for 580 net new affordable homes within the Neighbourhood Area up to 2036. It is anticipated that these needs will be met through the delivery of the Arborfield Strategic Development Location ('SDL'), part of which falls within the parish area and to which the site comprises a constituent part.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- 2.52 The NPPF comprises a material consideration in the determination of planning decisions. Formally updated most recently in December 2023, the NPPF sets out national planning policy in relation to the role of affordable housing delivery within the planning and decision-making processes.
- 2.53 In accordance with the NPPF, the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development comprises the combination of three overarching aims, including an economic, environmental, and social objective, which need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways.
- 2.54 Fundamental to the achievement of the social objective is the need to '*...support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations*'⁷ (emphasis added).
- 2.55 Furthermore, Chapter 5 of the NPPF (2023) focuses on delivering a sufficient supply of homes, in which the Government's objective of '*...significantly boosting the supply of homes...*' is confirmed⁸. Within this context, the NPPF confirms that Local Authorities should deliver a mix of housing sizes, types, and tenures, to meet the housing needs of different groups in the community, which includes '*...those who require affordable housing*'⁹.
- 2.56 Responsibility is placed on all major developments that involve the provision of housing to provide an element of affordable housing. The NPPF establishes that '*...at least 10% of new homes on major residential developments be available for affordable home ownership*'¹⁰.

⁷ National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) Paragraph 8. Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>.

⁸ *Ibid.* Paragraph 60.

⁹ *Ibid.* Paragraph 63.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* Paragraph 66.

2.57 The NPPF defines Affordable Housing as comprising ‘...housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions’:

- **Affordable housing for rent:** wherein rent is set in accordance with the Government’s rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents,
- **Starter homes:** as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act (2016) and subsequent legislation,
- **Discounted market sales housing:** wherein properties are sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value, and
- **Other affordable routes to home ownership:** including shared ownership schemes, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at least 20% below local market value), and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent).

Planning Practice Guidance

2.58 Planning Practice Guidance (‘PPG’) provides national guidance in relation to the implementation of the NPPF and elaborates on areas not specifically covered in detail within the document. Of particular relevance to the provision of affordable housing is the PPG section covering Planning Obligations¹¹.

First Homes

2.59 New national policy was introduced by the Government in May 2021 to promote home ownership – known as *First Homes*. First Homes being a new specific kind of discounted market sale housing considered to meet the definition of affordable housing for planning purposes. The PPG¹² sets out a minimum of 25% of all affordable housing units secured through developer contributions should now be first homes.

2.60 Notwithstanding the introduction of this new national policy and guidance in 2021, transitional arrangements for decision making purposes were also introduced. Specifically, the First Homes policy requirement does not apply for sites with full or outline planning permissions already in place or determined before 28 December 2021. Given the Outline Planning Permission was approved in 2017 the Reserved Matters application is not required to provide First Homes.

¹¹ Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-obligations>.

¹² Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 70-012-20210524

Affordable Housing Viability Study (Update) (2009)

- 2.61 The Update to the Affordable Housing Viability Study for Wokingham Borough Council was published in March 2009. There does not appear to be a more recent assessment of affordable housing viability; despite significant changes to the costs associated with both the construction of and sales values of affordable housing in the proceeding 14 years.
- 2.62 Based on the assessment, the Viability Study Update (2009) concludes that the proposed tenure split of 70% Social Rented and 30% Affordable Rented remained achievable for most development typologies, up to a maximum provision of 50% affordable housing.

Wokingham Borough Housing Strategy (2020-2024)

- 2.63 The Wokingham Borough Council Housing Strategy 2020-2024 sets out the Council's approach to understanding and addressing housing needs within the Borough over the 4-year period. In achieving this, part of the Council's role is identified as '*...working with developers and partners to deliver good quality sustainable homes in the right places*'.
- 2.64 Challenges identified for the Borough moving forward include the need to create places and communities that are inclusive to all, ensuring that new homes in the Borough are affordable, sustainable, are of a good quality, and can support those with specialist needs or who are at risk of homelessness. Furthermore, whilst the Borough enjoys relative wealth, a challenge comprises tackling the various '*...pockets of deprivation, unemployment and risk of poverty within working families...*' across the Borough: to which the provision of affordable and good quality housing is central.
- 2.65 To redress the issues identified, the Council is committed to delivering over 500 new affordable homes over the 4-year period, with an additional 800 affordable homes to be delivered through the Council's partnership with housing associations.

*First Homes Interim Policy Statement (2022)*¹³

- 2.66 In February 2022, the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement agreed that the draft First Homes Interim Policy Statement was suitable to be displayed on the Wokingham Borough Council website as a guide to the implications of First Homes in Wokingham and the Council's position on this new policy, whilst introducing local eligibility criteria for buyers of First Homes.

¹³ Available online at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-information/evidence-topics/>.

2.67 The Interim Policy Statement clarifies that:

'In the Wokingham Borough area, the provision of affordable housing is based upon a 70:30 split between social rent and shared ownership as detailed in the Affordable Housing Viability Study (Core Strategy Policy CP5, 4.32). With the introduction of the First Homes Policy, although each site is assessed on a site by site basis, as a guide Wokingham Borough Council will continue to request 70% social rent, with 25% being First Homes and the remaining 5% Shared Ownership, etc' (emphasis added).

2.68 As referred above, the requirement to provide First Homes does not apply to the Reserved Matters application in accordance with the transitional arrangements set out by the PPG.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2020 – 2024)

2.69 Wokingham Borough Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2020 – 2024) identifies four strategic priorities in relation to preventing homelessness and rough sleeping. Of these, one strategic priority comprises the need to '*...build more affordable homes*'.

2.70 The strategy reaffirms '*...affordability is a significant issue for many residents in the borough...*' and that to redress the issue, the Council's priority is to ensure that '*...the right homes are built in the right locations for those most in housing need*'.

2.71 To achieve this, Strategic Priority task 3.1 identifies two actions; to '*...ensure that the tenure mix and unit type of affordable housing coming forward seeks to address demand...(emphasis added)*' and that this assessment of demand will be undertaken through analysis of '*...the Housing Register and other data sources to understand the current and future demand for affordable homes in the borough (emphasis added)*'.

Conclusions on the Development Plan and Related Material Considerations

2.72 The Development Plan for Wokingham Borough, which is pertinent to the determination of a planning application at the site, currently comprises the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted 2010), the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (adopted 2014), and the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan (2023).

2.73 Other material considerations relevant to the determination of the planning application include: the Outline Planning Consent to which the reserved matters application is pursuant (application reference: O/2014/2179), the emerging Local Plan Update (2018 – 2038), the Wokingham Local Housing Needs Assessment (2020), the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), and Planning Practice Guidance.

2.74 Other relevant documents, including: the Affordable Housing Viability Study (2009), the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2013), the Housing Strategy 2020-2024, and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2020 – 2024), provide further context within which the determination of the planning application should be considered.

- 2.75 In the evidence set out in this section, in both adopted and emerging policy, alongside a wide range of other plans and strategies pertinent to Wokingham Borough, it is clear there is a long-established commitment and need to deliver affordable homes within the Borough.
- 2.76 However, it is clear that Wokingham Borough Council has a range of adopted policy requirements, strategies, and published evidence documents relating to the provision of affordable housing in the Borough. The most relevant aspects of these are summarised in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Summary of Adopted Policy Requirements, Guidance and Published Evidence on Affordable Housing Mix and Tenure¹⁴

Document	Affordable Housing Mix				Tenure		
	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	SO	SR	AR
Core Strategy (2010)	-	-	-	-	30%	70%	
Affordable Housing SPD (2013)	20%	15% (Flats) 30% (Houses)	20%	15%	30%	58%	Up to 12%
Managing Development Delivery (2014)	20%	45%	20%	15%	-	-	-
Hybrid Planning Permission O/2014/2179 Affordable Housing Scheme	-	-	-	-	30%	58%	12%
(Emerging) Wokingham Local Plan Update (2018 – 2038)	20-25%	45-50%	20-25%	5-10%	30%	70%	
Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Evidence Base							
Affordable Housing Viability Update (2009)	-	-	-	-	30%	70%	
Local Housing Needs Assessment (2020)	20-25%	45-50%	20-25%	5-10%	30%	70%	

- 2.77 The proposed development provides for an affordable housing contribution (35%) that meets the requirements in adopted Policies CP5 of the Core Strategy (2010) and TB05 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014), and the Hybrid Planning Permission's Affordable Housing Scheme.

¹⁴ It should be noted that many of these figures represent guides, or starting positions for negotiation, as in most cases Wokingham Borough Council have committed to negotiating the mix of housing on a case-by-case basis.

Table 4: Proposed Development Affordable Housing Mix and Tenure

	Affordable Housing Mix				Tenure		
	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	SO	SR	AR
Dwellings	-	12	2	0	6	7	1
%	-	86%	14%	0%	43%	50%	7%
Comparison with LHNA (2020)							
Dwellings	-3	+5	-1	-1	+2	-1	-1
%	-22.5%	+38.5%	-8.5%	-7.5%	+12%	-5%	-7%

- 2.78 In isolation, the proposed housing mix and tenure profile proposed for Parcel 8 does not fully align with the preferences set out within adopted planning policy, or the approved *Affordable Housing Scheme* for the Hogwood development, as shown in Table 4 above.
- 2.79 In arriving at the proposed affordable housing mix and tenure split, it is worth noting that the overall design of the site has been strongly led by the approved Parameter Plans (specifically the Density Parameter), the Masterplan Framework Document and the Overarching Landscaping Strategy for Hogwood Farm, which were approved as part of the S73 application (Ref. 181194).
- 2.80 However, on a cumulative basis with the wider land parcels now benefiting from reserved matters approvals, the proposed application also provides good alignment with the evidence of need set out in the LHNA (2020). Indeed, on a cumulative basis, there is evidence that a greater proportion of 2-bed affordable dwellings should be brought forward where opportunities are presented, given the current cumulative provision of 42% 2-bed affordable housing to date, against a target of 45-50%, as set out in Table 1.
- 2.81 The proposed development of 14 net new affordable homes at the application site, whilst of small quantum individually, would make a positive contribution toward the annual affordable housing needs of the Borough. This contribution is particularly significant when considered in the context of the considerable need for affordable housing in Wokingham Borough over the emerging plan period.

3. HOUSING AFFORDABILITY INDICATORS

Market Signals

- 3.1 Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') recognises the importance of giving due consideration to market signals as part of understanding affordability in the context of Plan making. This section sets out and considers a range of affordability indicators for the Wokingham Borough area and the Finchampstead Parish / Finchampstead South Ward in particular.

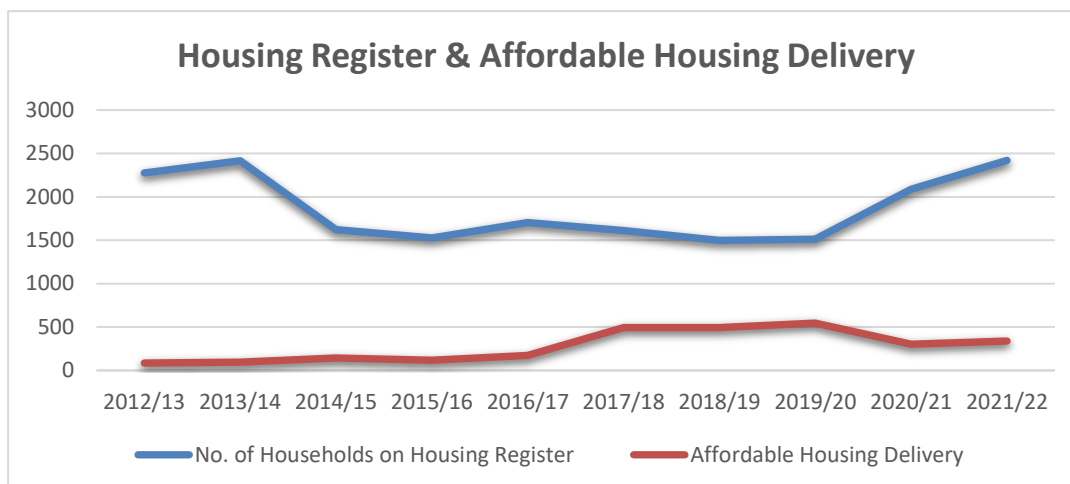
Housing Register and Lettings

- 3.2 On 31st March 2022, the Council's Housing Register comprised 2,420 households, according to the Council's FoI response (**Appendix 2**). However, Government data confirms that as at 31st March 2022, there were 2,592 households on the Housing Register in Wokingham Borough¹⁵, a difference of +152 households.
- 3.3 The Council's recorded figure of 2,420 households represents a 16% increase (actual 334 households) in a single year from 2,086 households at 31st March 2021, which itself represents an 27.6% increase from 1,510 households at 31st March 2020. Taking account of the Government's recorded figure would represent a 19.5% increase from March 2021 to March 2022. For consistency of analysis, this report considers the Council's recorded figure moving forward.
- 3.4 Of the 2,420 households on the Housing Register at 31st March 2022, 998 households specified a preference for an affordable home in Finchampstead Parish¹⁶ (which comprises both Finchampstead North and Finchampstead South Wards). This represents 41% of the total households on the Wokingham Borough Housing Register.
- 3.5 Figure 1 (below) provides a comparative analysis of the number of households on the Housing Register and the delivery of affordable housing (net) in Wokingham Borough since the start of the Strategic Market Housing Assessment ('SHMA') period (2013/14).

¹⁵ Source: Live Table 600.

¹⁶ The FoI submission requested data based on the geographical boundary of Finchampstead South Ward. However, the Council is only able to provide information for Finchampstead Parish.

Figure: 1 Number of Households on the Housing Register Compared with Affordable Housing Delivery (net)



- 3.6 As Figure 1 illustrates, affordable housing delivery has failed to progress at the same rate as the identified need on the housing register by a considerable margin for every single year in Wokingham since 2013.
- 3.7 With regard to the significant decrease in registered households from 2,417 in March 2014 to 1,622 in March 2015 (a reduction of 33% [actual 795 households]), notably, footnote 4 of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities ('DLUHC') Live Table 600 illuminates that:

'The Localism Act 2011, which came into force in 2012, gave local authorities the power to set their own qualification criteria determining who may or may not go onto the housing waiting list. Previously, local authorities were only able to exclude from their waiting list people deemed guilty of serious unacceptable behaviour. The Localism Act changes have contributed to the decrease in the number of households on waiting lists since 2012' (emphasis added).

- 3.8 Consequently, as a result of the Localism Act in 2012, many local authorities, including Wokingham Borough Council, have excluded applicants already on Housing Register waiting lists who no longer meet the revised, narrower criteria but who are still in need of affordable housing.
- 3.9 Following the changes brought about by the Localism Act in 2012, Wokingham Borough Council published a revised Housing Allocations Scheme in November 2014, which set various qualification criteria to determine who may go on to the waiting list. The current Housing Allocations Scheme was adopted on 1st April 2022¹⁷.

¹⁷ Available online at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/housing-and-tenants/housing-needs/register-for-social-housing/>.

- 3.10 The revision toward narrower criteria is evident in the fall of the number of individuals on Wokingham Borough's Housing Register between March 2014 and March 2015. Notwithstanding the Council's adoption of narrower criteria, it is evident the number of registered households has increased, particularly as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, to the extent that it now surpasses the number of households registered in 2014. This evidences that registered needs are worsening and almost certainly the actual additional needs of households which are unable to access the register make the position worse. The recorded position is therefore very much the minimum, or best-case understanding.
- 3.11 In this context, it is important to note that the Housing Register comprises just one part of the equation relating to affordable housing need. The housing register does not reflect the full definition of affordable housing need as set out in the NPPF: i.e., affordable rented, starter homes, discounted market sales housing and other affordable routes to home ownership including shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale and rent to buy, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.
- 3.12 In summary, there remains a specific group of households which fall within the gap of not being eligible to enter the housing register but who also cannot afford a market property and as such are in need of affordable housing. It is those households in this widening affordability gap whom the Government intends to assist by increasing the range of affordable housing types in the most recent NPPF. The number of households on the Council's Housing Register is only an indication of those in priority need and whom the Housing Department have a duty to house.

Housing Register Bids and Lettings

- 3.13 The Council's FoI response (refer to **Appendix 2**) confirms that the number of social housing lettings in Finchampstead Parish is seriously limited in comparison to the identified need in the area. Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 there were a total of 55 social housing lettings in Finchampstead Parish, which is equivalent to just 5.5% of the 998 households on the Housing Register that have expressed a preference for housing in the Ward.
- 3.14 Social rented lettings within Finchampstead Parish were further limited between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, equating to 17 lettings within the monitoring period. This represents just 1.7% of the 998 households currently on the Housing Register that have expressed a preference for housing in the Ward. Over the two-year period, social lettings in Finchampstead South Ward represent just 7.2% of the number of households that have currently expressed a preference for housing in the Ward.
- 3.15 The Council's lettings data demonstrates that for households seeking an affordable home in Finchampstead Parish, there is little prospect of having their needs met. This prospect is likely to be further reduced if considering just Finchampstead South Ward. High levels of demand and insufficient delivery of new homes over a sustained period of time mean that the existing housing stock is clearly substantially oversubscribed.

- 3.16 Notably, the Housing Register comprises just one indicator of the level of housing need in an area. The NPPF includes a definition of 'Affordable Housing' in Annex 2: Definitions, which includes a broader understanding of affordable housing than would be represented on the Housing Register; including affordable rented, discounted market sales homes, shared ownership schemes, and other affordable routes to the provision of homes for lower cost sale and rent.
- 3.17 As set out in paragraph 3.9, there remains a significant group of households that fall within the gap of not being able to afford a market property and not being eligible to enter the Housing Register, which are in need of affordable housing provision. The Government's definition of affordable housing is aimed toward assisting this group of households that fall within the worsening affordability gap.

Temporary Accommodation

- 3.18 The Council's FoI response (refer to Appendix 2) shows that within Wokingham Borough, between 01 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, there were 116 households being housed in temporary accommodation within the authority, meaning those in need of affordable housing are being housed in temporary accommodation.
- 3.19 However, a further 167 households are being housed in bed and breakfast accommodation, with 72 of those being housed within Wokingham Borough and 95 being housed outside of the Borough. Leading homelessness charity Shelter advises that this type of accommodation should only be utilised as '*...a last resort, where emergency accommodation is required at very short notice, or in rare cases where it is the best option for the applicant*'¹⁸.

Homelessness

- 3.20 DLUHC statutory homelessness data¹⁹ shows that in the 12 months between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, the Council accepted 131 households in need of homelessness prevention duty²⁰, and a further 182 households in need of relief duty²¹ from the Council. Evidently, there is a pressing need to house vulnerable people within Wokingham Borough.

¹⁸ Shelter (Accessed 2023) Online Resource, available at: https://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/legal/homelessness_applications/offers_and_suitability_of_accommodation_for_homeless_applicants/accommodation_standards_and_costs_for_homelessness_accommodation.

¹⁹ Source: DLUHC Statutory homelessness: Detailed local authority-level tables.

²⁰ The Prevention Duty places a duty on housing authorities to work with people who are threatened with homelessness within 56 days to help prevent them from becoming homelessness. The prevention duty applies when a local authority is satisfied that an applicant is threatened with homelessness and eligible for assistance.

²¹ The Relief Duty requires housing authorities to help people who are homeless to secure accommodation. The relief duty applies when a local authority is satisfied that an applicant is homeless and eligible for assistance.

- 3.21 The National Audit Office ('NAO') (2017) found that the single largest driver of statutory homelessness in England was the ending of private sector tenancies. The report also noted '*...the affordability of tenancies is likely to have contributed to the increase in homelessness*'. There is clearly a relationship between the general level of housing affordability within an area and the extent of statutory homelessness within that area.
- 3.22 The Council's response to the FoI request confirms that in the 12-month period between April 2022 to March 2023, the Council accepted 170 applications from households in need of homelessness prevention duty, and a further 206 households in need of relief duty from the Council. This is clearly evidence of a persistent and substantial need to house vulnerable people within the Borough.

Private Rental Market

- 3.23 Data presented by the Valuation Office Agency ('VOA') and gathered by the Office for National Statistics ('ONS') demonstrates that median private rents in Wokingham Borough are £1,100 per month in the 2021/22 monitoring year. This is 16% higher than the South East regional average of £950 per month and 38% higher than the national average of £795 per month over the same period. These figures are demonstrated in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Median Private Sector Rents between 2013/14 and 2021/22²²

Geographic Area	Median Rent in 2013/14	Median Rent in 2021/22	% Change
Wokingham Borough	£950	£1,100	+16%
South East Region	£750	£950	+27%
England	£595	£795	+34%

- 3.24 Whereas Median private rents demonstrate the average rental value in the authority area, the Lower Quartile private sector rents figures are representative of the 'entry level' element of the private rented sector. Lower Quartile private rental values represent dwellings typically sought by households on lower incomes and those relying upon Local Housing Allowance to cover their housing costs.
- 3.25 For those seeking lower quartile properties, the average private sector monthly rent in Wokingham Borough was £895 per month during the 2021/22 monitoring period, as demonstrated in Table 6 (below). This figure is 15% higher than the equivalent figure for the South East region, which was £775 per month, and 50% higher than the national average Lower Quartile private sector rent at £595 per month, during the same monitoring period.

²² Source: Valuation Office Agency and Office for National Statistics.

Table 6: Median Private Sector Rents between 2013/14 and 2021/22²³

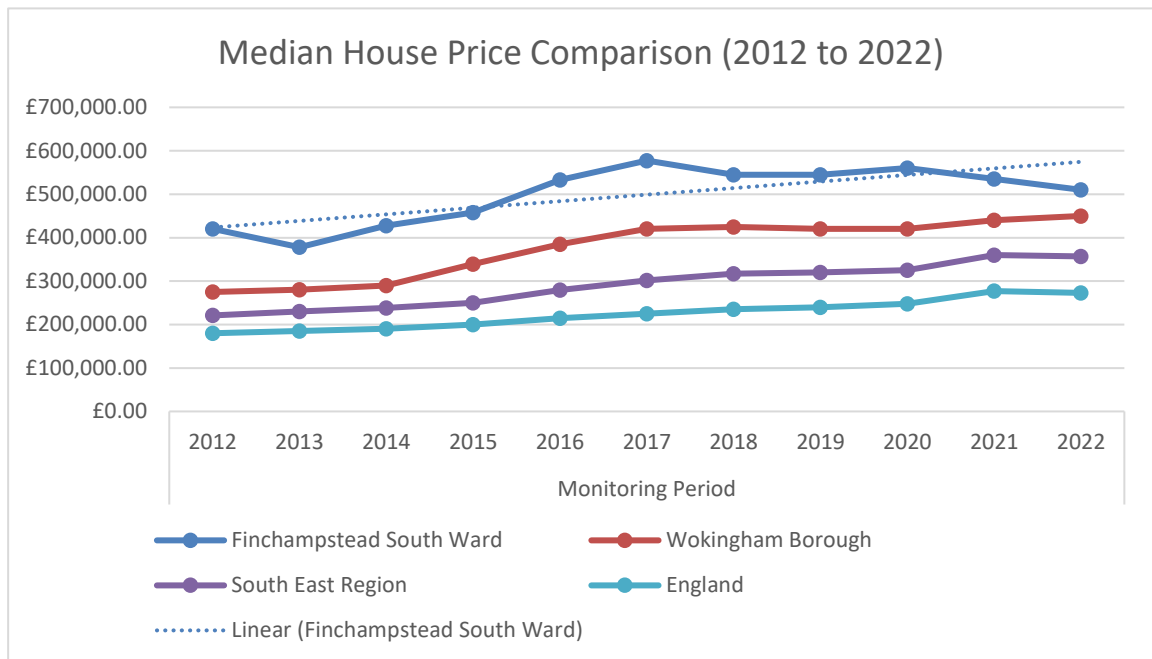
Geographic Area	Lower Quartile Rent in 2013/14	Lower Quartile Rent in 2021/22	% Change
Wokingham Borough	£800	£895	+12%
South East Region	£600	£775	+29%
England	£465	£595	+28%

- 3.26 The disparity between local, regional, and national rents at the Lower Quartile figure, when compared with the equivalent Median figure, demonstrates that there is increasing affordability pressure at the 'entry level' of the private rented sector in Wokingham Borough.

Median House Prices

- 3.27 Figure 2 (below) demonstrates the median house sales prices for England, the South East region, Wokingham Borough, and Finchampstead South Ward (in which the application site is located).
- 3.28 During the year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, the median house price in Finchampstead South Ward of £510,000 is 13% higher than the Wokingham Borough average (£450,000), 43% higher than the regional average of £357,000 and almost double (87% higher) than the national average of £273,000.
- 3.29 House prices in both Finchampstead South Ward and Wokingham Borough overall are therefore much higher than the rest of the region and country, further constraining opportunities for first time buyers to purchase a home in this area. It is noted that house prices may have reduced slightly in Finchampstead Ward between 2020 and 2022, owing to the higher delivery of homes within the area as a result of the approved Reserved Matters applications (pursuant to Outline consent O/2014/2179) being implemented.

²³ Source: Valuation Office Agency and Office for National Statistics.

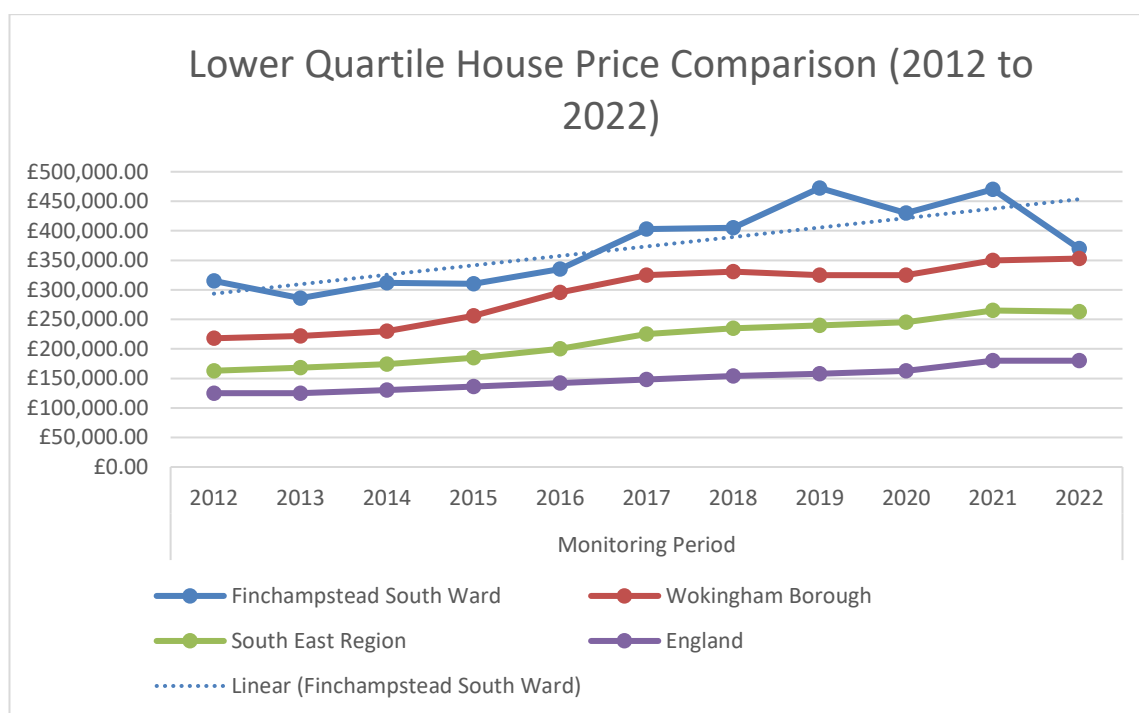
Figure: 2 Median House Price Comparison (2012 to 2022)²⁴

Lower Quartile House Prices

- 3.30 Lower quartile house prices are more representative of the 'entry level' of the housing market. In terms of lower quartile house prices, as is demonstrated in Figure 3 (below), within Finchampstead South Ward, the lower quartile house price has risen from £315,000 in 2012 to £370,000 in 2022; an increase of 17%.
- 3.31 As at 31 March 2022, the lower quartile house price of £370,000 in Finchampstead South Ward is 41% higher than the equivalent average across the South East Region of £263,000, and 106% higher than the national average of £180,000.
- 3.32 It is noted the sample size for house price sales is smaller within Finchampstead South Ward, owing to the less consistent picture of prices, but the prices within the Ward remain persistently high, consistently above the equivalent average prices within Wokingham Borough and the South East region, and significantly above England as a whole.

²⁴ Source: ONS HPSSA Datasets 9 and 37. Ward scale data relates to 'Finchampstead South Ward'.

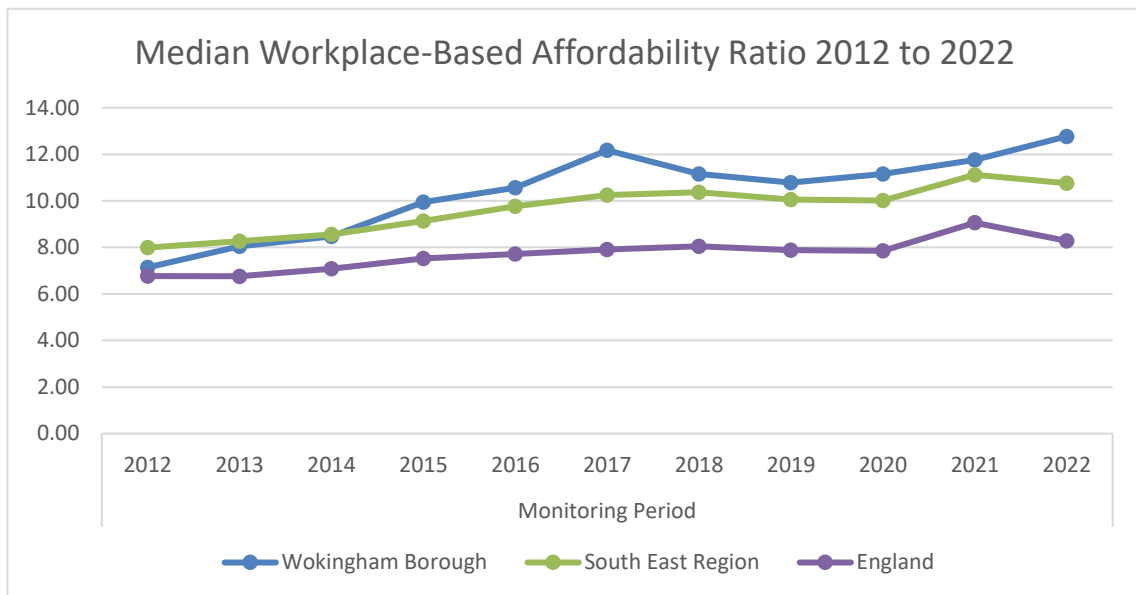
Figure: 3 Lower Quartile House Price Comparison (2012 to 2022)



Affordability Ratios

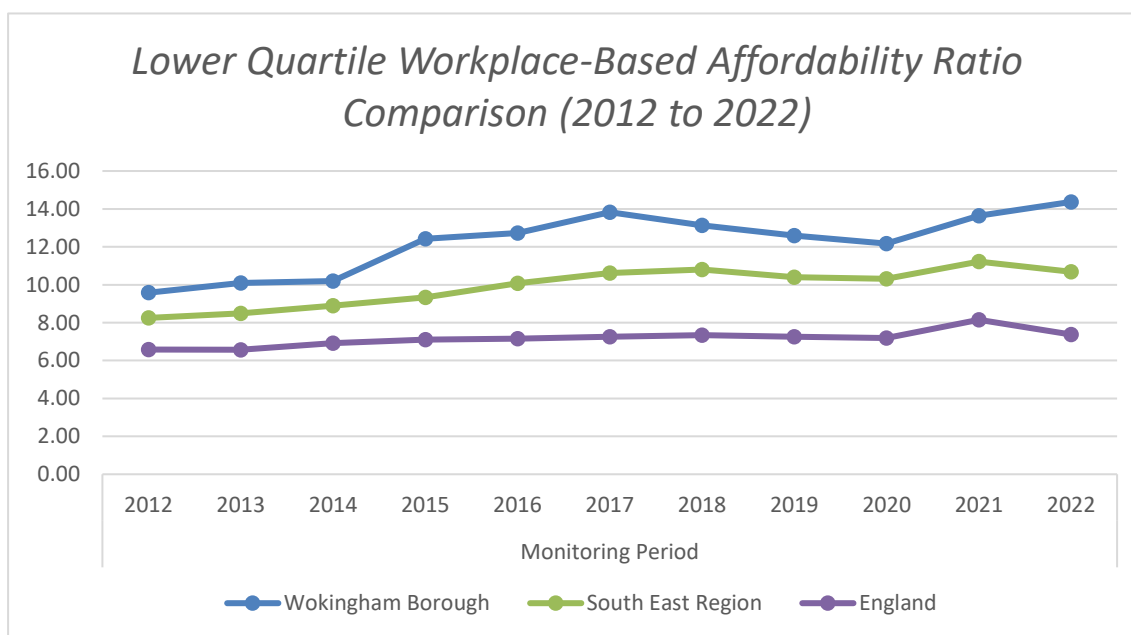
- 3.33 Data showing the actual value of housing in Wokingham Borough comprises just one element of understanding the affordability of housing within the area. Housing Affordability Ratios provide further context to understanding the level of affordability for members of the community of homes in the area.
- 3.34 The Median Workplace-Based Affordability Ratio of Wokingham Borough, which compares the average income of the authority's residents with the average house sale price, comprised 7.14 in 2012. The equivalent figure for 2022 stands at 12.77; comprising an increase of 79%, meaning that homes in Wokingham are just under half as affordable in 2022 as they were in 2012. This demonstrates that the average value of homes in Wokingham Borough has considerably outstripped average earnings in the same area over the 10-year period.
- 3.35 Comparably, the ratio of median house prices to median incomes across the South East region and England now stand at 10.75 and 8.28 respectively. Consequently, the median relative unaffordability of homes in Wokingham is 19% higher than the South East region and 54% higher than England as a whole.

Figure: 4 Wokingham Borough Median Workplace-Based Affordability Ratio 2012 to 2022



- 3.36 In the 12-month period between March 2021 and March 2022, the Median house price to income ratio in Wokingham Borough has increased by almost 9% to 12.77. This means that those on median incomes in Wokingham Borough need to find almost 13 times their annual income to purchase a median priced property.
- 3.37 It is worth noting that mortgage lenders typically offer on the basis of up to a maximum of 4.5 times household earnings (subject to individual circumstances). In Wokingham Borough, the affordability ratio is **almost three times higher** than that and is continuing to rise.
- 3.38 Furthermore, Wokingham Borough comprised one of only 89 out of the 330 (27%) Local Authorities across England that demonstrated an uplift in housing unaffordability during the 2021 – 2022 monitoring period. This demonstrates the serious impact that the Borough's historic underprovision of affordable housing is having on the affordability of housing in the area.
- 3.39 In relation to the affordability of Lower Quartile priced properties, which are typically considered to comprise the 'more affordable' segment of the housing market, the ratio of lower quartile house prices to incomes in Wokingham Borough now stands at 14.37, which is a 50% increase since 2012. This is set out in Figure 5 below.

Figure: 5 Lower Quartile Workplace-Based Affordability Ratio Comparison (2012 to 2022)

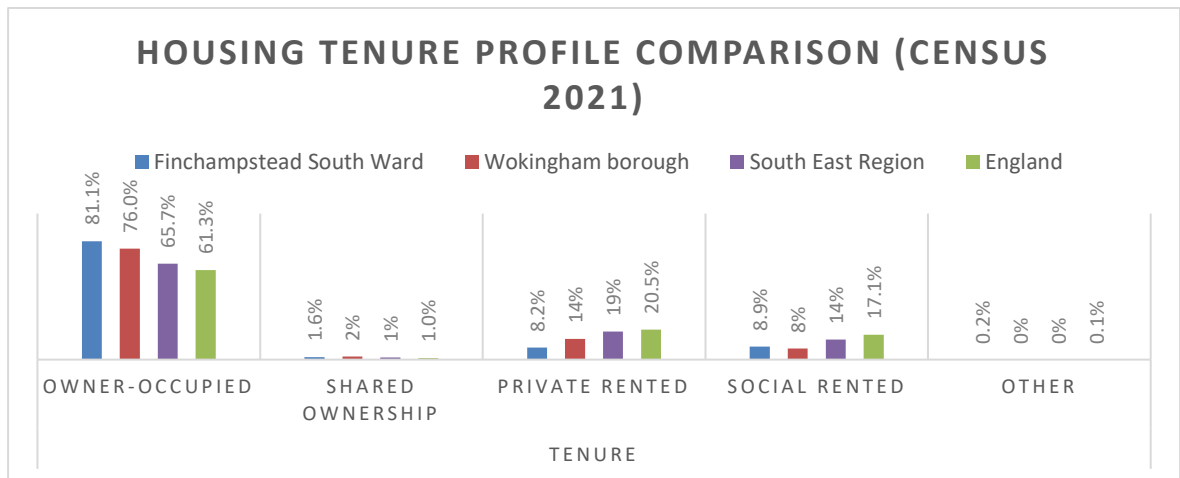


- 3.40 As demonstrate in Figure 5, the relative affordability of Lower Quartile homes in Wokingham Borough is persistently greater than the South East regional average and the national average. This means that a lower quartile 'entry level' priced home in Wokingham Borough is 95% less affordable than the national average, for households on lower quartile workplace-based earnings.
- 3.41 In the 12-month period between March 2021 and March 2022, the Lower Quartile house price to income ratio in Wokingham Borough has increased by 5% to 14.37. Despite the decrease in unaffordability across the South East region and nationally, this means that those on lower quartile incomes in Wokingham Borough need to find **over 14 times their annual income** to purchase a lower quartile priced property.
- 3.42 In relation to typical mortgage lending rates, in Wokingham Borough the affordability ratio for lower quartile properties is therefore **over three times higher** than the maximum 4.5 times household earnings that lenders are typically able to offer to lower quartile earners.

Tenure Profile

- 3.43 At the time of the 2011 Census, the tenure profile of Wokingham Borough and Finchampstead South Ward consisted predominantly of home ownership. Across Finchampstead South Ward, 81.6% of all dwellings were owner-occupied, compared to 79.7% at the local authority level and the national average of 63.3%.
- 3.44 Conversely, shared ownership housing made up just 0.1% of housing stock in Finchampstead South Ward, which equates to just 2 shared ownership dwellings out of a total dwelling stock of 2,113 across the Ward. Notably, just 6.8% of homes in the Ward were privately rented, whereas 10.6% of homes were social rented, demonstrating a significant demand for all affordable housing tenures in the Ward.

Figure: 6 Housing Tenure Profile Comparison (Census 2021)



- 3.45 The Census data demonstrates that the tenure profile of Finchampstead South Ward in 2021 is clearly skewed towards owner occupation, and that at the time of the Census there was very limited provision of shared ownership, affordable rented and social rented properties²⁵. This imbalance in local housing tenures is contrary to the NPPF's²⁶ objective of creating 'mixed and balanced communities'.
- 3.46 Notably, there has been a reduction within the Ward of 10 Social Rented homes since the 2011 Census. In this context, the provision of 14 affordable dwellings at the application site would contribute towards meeting this objective, by improving the availability of affordable homes, in a settlement and authority where the tenure split is presently dominated by home ownership.

Conclusions on Affordability Indicators

- 3.47 Our analysis of market signals covering the 10-year period from 2012 to 2022 has demonstrated that Wokingham Borough displays a persistent trend of worsening housing affordability across the local authority area. The trend is replicated at the hyper-local scale, with even more acute housing affordability pressures within the Finchampstead South Ward specifically.
- 3.48 Analysis of market signals indicates a worsening affordability trend across the Local Authority area in relation to both median and lower quartile prices for rented accommodation. Similar worsening affordability trends are present in relation to median and lower quartile house prices, wherein the affordability of lower quartile house prices in relation to lower quartile household incomes is even more acute than it is for the equivalent median ratio, demonstrating acute housing unaffordability at the highly sensitive 'entry level' element of the housing market.

²⁵ A position unchanged from the 2011 Census data.

²⁶ NPPF (2021) Paragraph 65.

4. AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS

- 4.1 The adopted development plan for Wokingham Borough does not set specific targets for the amount of affordable housing to be delivered annually. However, adopted Policies CP5 and TB05 do seek to secure up to 50% of all net new homes as affordable homes over the 20-year plan period. When taking account of the Housing Requirement set in Policy CP17: Housing Delivery, this equates to a target of *circa* 331 net new affordable homes per annum.
- 4.2 To achieve this, Policies CP5 and TB05 introduce a tiered set of requirements, which seek the provision of at least 20-40% affordable homes on sites of 5-15 or more dwellings, depending on the site's characteristics, and up to 50% where viable.

Affordable Housing Needs Evidence Base

- 4.3 In considering the most up-to-date assessments of local housing need, it is important to consider the objectively assessed need ('OAN') for affordable housing within Wokingham Borough.
- 4.4 This evidence is contained within the Wokingham Local Housing Needs Assessment (2020). Previous assessments of housing need have been provided within the Western Berkshire OAN Sensitivity Report (2018), which itself provides an updated analysis of the Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2016) ('SHMA'). The findings of the assessment(s) are considered below.

Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2016)

- 4.5 The SHMA (2016)²⁷ comprises the original publication, which was updated in 2018 to provide the 'Western Berkshire OAN Sensitivity Report (2018)'. The analysis identifies the Borough's affordable housing needs over the 23-year period from 2013 to 2036 and covers a housing market area ('HMA') that includes the administrative areas of the Western Berkshire HMA Councils (Bracknell Forest, Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire).
- 4.6 The analysis of the SHMA (2016) identifies a need for the Western Berkshire HMA authorities of 2,855 dwellings per annum across the housing market area, with a specific need in Wokingham Borough for 856 dwellings per annum. The SHMA (2016) identifies that the equivalent net need for affordable dwellings within Wokingham Borough comprises 441 dwellings per annum.

²⁷ Available online at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-information/evidence-topics/>.

Western Berkshire OAN Sensitivity Report (2018)

- 4.7 The analysis of the Western Berkshire OAN Sensitivity Report (2018)²⁸ is based upon meeting affordable housing needs over the same 23-year period from 2013 to 2036. The OAN Sensitivity Report (2018) also covers the same housing market area and the same 23-year period from 2013 to 2036.
- 4.8 The Western Berkshire OAN Sensitivity Report (2018) identifies a total annualised requirement of 801 dwellings per annum in Wokingham Borough for the 13 years between 2013 and 2036. It also identifies the equivalent annualised requirement of 453 affordable homes per annum over the same period²⁹.
- 4.9 The update figure is 12 affordable dwellings per annum higher than the Western Berkshire OAN Sensitivity Report (2018) concluded, reflecting worsening affordability within Wokingham Borough.
- 4.10 The OAN Sensitivity Report (2018) concluded that Wokingham Borough's identified need for affordable housing comprised approximately 57% of the total identified need for net new housing up to 2036.

Wokingham Local Housing Needs Assessment (2020)

- 4.11 The Wokingham Local Housing Needs Assessment ('LHNA') (2020) provides an assessment of housing needs within the Borough over the 18-year period from 2018 to 2036. The assessment identifies that the appropriate housing need figure for the Borough comprises the Local Housing Need, as derived through the Government's Standard Method of calculation, in accordance with national planning guidance.
- 4.12 In 2019, when the assessment was prepared, the Local Housing Need figure for the Borough, as derived through the Standard Method, comprised 804 dwellings per annum. Undertaking the same assessment with the latest available information as at May 2023, the Standard Method comprises 795 dwellings per annum, a minor decrease of 9 homes per year.
- 4.13 In relation to affordable housing need specifically, the LHNA (2020) identifies a total of 3,725 net new affordable homes are required up to 2036. Figure 41 in the report details the projected need for the different mix and tenures of affordable housing provision during the assessment period. The conclusions on affordable housing mix and tenure requirements up to 2036 are summarised in Table 7 below.

²⁸ Available online at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-information/evidence-topics/>.

²⁹ Refer to Table 43 (Page 73).

Table 7: Summary of LHNA (2020) Affordable Housing Needs for Wokingham Borough to 2036

Dwelling Size	Affordable Housing Need				Total Affordable Housing
	Shared Ownership	% of Total	Social Rent	% of Total	
1 bedroom	427	20%	445	27%	872
2 bedrooms	950	45%	881	54%	1831
3 bedrooms	632	30%	279	17%	911
4+ bedrooms	95	5%	15	1%	111
Total	2104		1620		3725

5. AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY

Past Affordable Housing Delivery in Wokingham Borough

- 5.1 In considering the past record of affordable housing delivery in Wokingham Borough, it is important to note the Council's housing completion figures for both market and affordable housing delivery differ considerably to those recorded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities ('DLUHC').
- 5.2 Table 7 (below) illustrates the difference between the recorded delivery of Affordable Housing in Wokingham Borough over the Core Strategy (2010) period to date (2006 – 2022). The Council's latest Authorities Monitoring Report ('AMR') (2020 – 2021)³⁰, in combination with its response to the FoI request (refer to **Appendix 2**), reports the completion of 12,465 net new homes total over the period 2006 – 2022, which is +194 homes above the equivalent data held by DLUHC.
- 5.3 Furthermore, over the period 2006 – 2022, the Council's latest AMR, in combination with the response to the FoI request, report the completion of 2,676 new net affordable dwellings within the Borough³¹. Over the same period, DLUHC report the completion of 3,439 affordable homes. The Council's data therefore provides that -763 fewer affordable homes have been delivered within the Authority's area during the period, when compared with the equivalent data held by DLUHC.
- 5.4 The inconsistencies between the data sets relate to the different sources; DLUHC's data is provided by Homes England and reflects actual affordable housing registrations, whereas the Council's data appears to report practical building completions. However, upon further examination, there are additional inconsistencies within the Council's own data between published AMRs. For example, of the total housing completions in the six year monitoring period between 2006/7 to 2011/12, just one monitoring period result (2009/10) remains the same within the Council's 2012/13 and 2020/21 AMRs.
- 5.5 Given the inconsistencies presented within the Council's housing completion data, this report utilises data held by DLUHC for the remainder of the analysis.
- 5.6 It should be noted that the DLUHC data presents a significantly more positive picture of affordable housing delivery within the Borough than the Council's own data presents, and importantly it is a more consistent data set. This is demonstrated in Table 8 (below), wherein the DLUHC data shows the delivery of +763 additional affordable homes than the Council's data presents.
- 5.7 The DLUHC data is therefore presenting the 'better case scenario'. Nonetheless, this is not to say that the WBC data should be ignored or be taken into consideration.

³⁰ Available online at: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-information/planning-policy-supporting-information/>.

³¹ The Council's data for the number of affordable homes completed during the period 2006 – 2008 does not appear to be available online. To assist in fair analysis, the completions for this period are assumed to be equivalent to the number recorded by DLUHC.

Table 8: Comparison of Data Recorded by DLUHC and WBC in Relation to Market and Affordable Housing Delivery (2006/7 – 2021/22)

Monitoring Period	Total Housing Completions (Net)			Additions to Affordable Housing Stock (Gross)			Affordable Housing as % of Total Completions (DLUHC Data)	Affordable Housing as % of Total Completions (WBC Data)
	DLUHC Data	WBC Data	Difference	DLUHC Data	WBC Data	Difference		
2006/7	985	1011	26	93	93*	-	9%	9%
2007/8	455	482	27	102	102*	-	22%	21%
2008/9	335	369	34	71	71*	-	21%	19%
2009/10	193	226	33	94	70	-24	49%	31%
2010/11	187	217	30	78	70	-8	42%	32%
2011/12	273	267	-6	148	146	-2	54%	55%
2012/13	401	390	-11	92	91	-1	23%	23%
2013/14	493	488	-5	108	108	0	22%	22%
2014/15	454	454	0	157	95	-62	35%	21%
2015/16	638	675	37	123	13	-110	19%	2%
2016/17	933	967	34	220	212	-8	24%	22%
2017/18	1509	1528	19	488	482	-6	32%	32%
2018/19	1250	1284	34	490	365	-125	39%	28%
2019/20	1555	1555	0	535	465	-70	34%	30%
2020/21	1129	1167	38	302	187	-115	27%	16%
2021/22	1481	1385	-96	338	106	-232	23%	8%
Total	12271	12465	194	3439	2676	-763	28%	21%
Average/Annum	767	779	12	215	167	-59	28%	21%

*Data not available; values have been assumed as equivalent to DLUHC data to assist analysis.

- 5.8 Based on the data recorded by DLUHC, which represents the most positive potential delivery position for the Borough, Table 9 (below) illustrates the recorded delivery of Affordable Housing ('AH') in Wokingham Borough over the 16-year Core Strategy (2010) plan period to date.

Table 9: Gross Additions to Affordable Housing Stock 2006/7 to 2021/22³²

Monitoring Period	Total Housing Completions (Net)	Additions to Affordable Housing Stock (Gross)	Affordable Housing as % of Total Completions
2006/7	985	93	9%
2007/8	455	102	22%
2008/9	335	71	21%
2009/10	193	94	49%
2010/11	187	78	42%
2011/12	273	148	54%
2012/13	401	92	23%
2013/14	493	108	22%
2014/15	454	157	35%
2015/16	638	123	19%
2016/17	933	220	24%
2017/18	1509	488	32%
2018/19	1250	490	39%
2019/20	1555	535	34%
2020/21	1129	302	27%
2021/22	1481	338	23%
Total	12,271	3,439	28%
Average/Annum	767	215	28%

- 5.9 As illustrated above, between 2006/7 and 2021/22, a total of 12,271 dwellings were delivered in Wokingham Borough. This equates to an average of 767 per annum throughout the period. Of these, 3,439 dwellings were delivered with affordable tenures, which equates to an average of 215 affordable homes per annum.
- 5.10 Consequently, the delivery of affordable housing comprises 28% of the total number of all new homes delivered throughout the period. This rate of delivery comprises approximately 63% of the 331 affordable dwellings per annum target anticipated in Policies CP5 and CP17 in the adopted Core Strategy (2010), and Policy TB05 of the MDD (2014).

³² Source: DLUHC Live Tables 1008c.

- 5.11 Policy CP5 seeks the achievement of approximately 50% of all homes delivered in Wokingham Borough to be affordable tenures. Over the Core Strategy plan period to date, the actual rate of affordable housing delivery comprises just 28% of the total number of homes delivered.
- 5.12 When taking into account the Council's presented general and affordable housing delivery data, the overall delivery rate of affordable housing over the Core Strategy plan period to date would be even lower, falling to 25%.

Accounting for the Right to Buy

- 5.13 The gross delivery of affordable homes set out in Table 9 (above) does not take account of any losses from the affordable housing stock through either demolitions or through the 'Right to Buy' ('RtB') sales of existing Council and Registered Providers³³ ('RP') affordable housing stock.
- 5.14 Table 10 (below) illustrates the annual delivery of affordable housing since the start of the Core Strategy plan period in 2006/7, against the loss of affordable housing stock through Right to Buy sales and gains through associated acquisitions.
- 5.15 The table demonstrates there were gross sales of 155 affordable homes over the period, which equates to 4.5% of the gross affordable housing completions over the same 16-year period. Over the same period, Wokingham Borough Council acquired a total of 63 new affordable homes via purchase through the receipts from RtB sales. Once taken into account, the net delivery of affordable housing in Wokingham Borough falls to 3,347 new affordable homes over the 16-year period. This equates to an average of just 209 affordable dwellings per annum (refer to Table 8 below).
- 5.16 At the national level, almost two million households have exercised the Right to Buy since its introduction in 1980. In July 2015, the Government published 'Fixing the Foundations: Creating a More Prosperous Nation', which confirmed their commitment to extending the Right to Buy to housing association tenants, noting that '*...since the Right to Buy for Council tenants was reinvigorated in the last Parliament, the number of sales has increased by nearly 320%*'.
- 5.17 Furthermore, the Government's Housing White Paper (2017) sets out that the *reinvigoration* of the Right to Buy scheme in 2012, which increased associated purchase discounts significantly, has resulted in a further over 60,000 affordable homes being sold. This is equivalent to an average of 12,000 affordable homes lost per year, every year, on a national basis, for the five-year period between 2012 and 2017.

³³ RtB data on RP sales of affordable housing to tenants is contained in annual Statistical Data Returns ('SDR') data sets for the period 2011/12 to 2021/22 published by the Regulator of Social Housing. These figures have been combined on an annual basis to produce total Right to Buy sales.

- 5.18 The extension of the Right to Buy scheme to Housing Association tenants is considered likely to further increase the loss of the existing affordable housing stock both nationally and locally. Consequently, further pressure is placed on the need to deliver a greater number of affordable homes in Wokingham Borough in the immediate future.
- 5.19 The significance of taking losses from existing social housing stock is affirmed in the Council's Local Housing Need Assessment (2020), which confirms at paragraph 11 that:

'Any losses from the current stock (such as demolition or clearance, or sales through Right to Buy) would increase the number of affordable dwellings needed by an equivalent amount'.

Table 10: Net Affordable Housing Completions, Additions to Housing Stock, and Right to Buy Losses (2006 to 2022)³⁴

Monitoring Period	Total housing completions (Net)	Additions to AH Stock (Gross)	LPA Acquisitions	LPA RtB sales	RP RtB sales	Additions to AH Stock (Net of RtB)	Additions to AH Stock (Net of RtB) as a % of total completions
	A	B	C	D	E	F (B+C) – (D+E)	G (F / A) * 100
2006/7	985	93	N/A	7	N/A	86	9%
2007/8	455	102	N/A	14	N/A	88	19%
2008/9	335	71	N/A	0	N/A	71	21%
2009/10	193	94	N/A	1	N/A	93	48%
2010/11	187	78	N/A	4	N/A	74	40%
2011/12	273	148	N/A	1	N/A	147	54%
2012/13	401	92	N/A	6	1	85	21%
2013/14	493	108	1	12	1	96	19%
2014/15	454	157	1	13	1	144	32%
2015/16	638	123	3	8	0	118	18%
2016/17	933	220	8	19	35	174	19%
2017/18	1509	488	11	7	0	492	33%
2018/19	1250	490	13	9	1	493	39%
2019/20	1555	535	17	7	0	545	35%
2020/21	1129	302	1	0	1	302	27%
2021/22	1481	338	8	7	0	339	23%
Total	12271	3439	63	115	40	3347	27%
Average / Annum	767	215	7	8	4	209	27%

³⁴ Source: DLUHC Live Tables (122, 1008c, 693.c2, 691) and Private Registered Provider Social Housing Stock in England: Statistical Data Returns (2013/14 to 2020/21)

- 5.20 Table 10 demonstrates that between 2006 and 2022, Wokingham Borough has benefitted from the average addition of 209 net affordable dwellings per annum, resulting from the total net calculation of housing delivery, Right to Buy sales, and affordable housing stock acquisitions. Over the plan period to date, this equates to the delivery of 63% of the total identified need of 331 affordable homes per annum. It should be noted this figure is likely to fall even lower once demolitions are taken into account.
- 5.21 The evidence set out above clearly demonstrates the exercise of Right to Buy sales are consistently depleting the affordable housing stock across Wokingham Borough faster than the Council is able to replace the stock through acquisitions and new build affordable homes. This position is also reflected for many years now across the wider South East Region and throughout England.

Affordable Housing Delivery Compared to Affordable Housing Needs

Core Strategy (2010) [2006 – 2026]

- 5.1 Table 11 (below) illustrates the net DLUHC recorded affordable housing delivery within Wokingham Borough (accounting for the net loss of dwellings due to the Right to Buy scheme), covering the whole of the adopted Core Strategy (2010) plan period to date, compared to the requirement for affordable homes (of 331 dpa) set out within Policies CP5 and CP17 of the Core Strategy. Data is available up to and including the 2021/22 monitoring period.

Table 11: Net Additions to Affordable Housing Stock Compared with Core Strategy (2010) Requirement³⁵

Monitoring Period	Additions to AH Stock (Net)	Core Strategy AH Needs (Net)	Annual Shortfall	Cumulative Shortfall	Additions as a % of Needs
2006/07	86	331	-245	-245	26%
2007/08	88	331	-243	-488	27%
2008/09	71	331	-260	-748	21%
2009/10	93	331	-238	-986	28%
2010/11	74	331	-257	-1,243	22%
2011/12	147	331	-184	-1,427	44%
2012/13	85	331	-246	-1,673	26%
2013/14	96	331	-235	-1,908	29%
2014/15	144	331	-187	-2,095	44%
2015/16	118	331	-213	-2,308	36%
2016/17	174	331	-157	-2,465	53%
2017/18	492	331	161	-2,304	149%
2018/19	493	331	162	-2,142	149%
2019/20	545	331	214	-1,928	165%
2020/21	302	331	-29	-1,957	91%
2021/22	339	331	8	-1,949	102%
Total	3,347	5,296	-1,949	-1,949	63%
Average / Annum	209	331	-122		63%

- 5.2 Since the start of the Core Strategy (2010) plan period, affordable housing completions (net of Right to Buy) have been 209 net new affordable homes per annum on average, against an identified requirement of 331 net affordable homes per annum.
- 5.3 Consequently, there is presently a cumulative shortfall of (negative) -1,949 affordable homes within Wokingham Borough over the 16-year period alone, equivalent to an average annual shortfall of -122 affordable homes, in relation to the Council's adopted requirement. It is worth noting that the Council's adopted requirement remains significantly lower than any calculation of Objectively Assessed Need ('OAN') for affordable housing, whether within the SHMA (2015), OAN Sensitivity Assessment (2018), or LHNA (2020).

³⁵ Source: DLUHC Live Tables 122, 1008c, 691, 693c2; Private Registered Provider Social Housing Stock in England Statistical Data Returns; and Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2009).

- 5.4 On the basis of the Council's adopted requirement for affordable housing, there presently remains a need for at least 3,273 additional affordable homes in the Borough to the end of the plan period (2026). This provides for an annual remaining need of at least 818 additional affordable homes per year to the end of the plan period, which is greater than the Council's delivery in any single year to date.
- 5.5 On the basis of the Council's own data, affordable housing additions equate to approximately 51% of the adopted affordable homes target requirement.
- 5.6 Taking account of the Council's presented data, the residual need for net new affordable homes up to 2026 becomes +4,036 to meet the adopted requirement. This equates to an annualised need for at least 1,009 net new affordable homes per annum to meet the Council's adopted requirement for affordable housing by 2026.

Wokingham Local Housing Needs Assessment (2020)

- 5.7 The Wokingham Local Housing Needs Assessment ('LHNA') (2020) within the Borough covers the 18-year period from 2018 to 2036. In total, the assessment identifies the need for an additional 7,255 – 7,329 affordable homes over the assessment period, equivalent to between 403 – 407 new affordable homes per year.
- 5.8 Table 12 (below) illustrates the delivery of affordable housing within Wokingham Borough compared with the identified need for affordable housing within the LHNA (2020) over the assessment period to date.

Table 12: Net Additions to Affordable Housing Stock Compared with LHNA (2020) Identified Need

Monitoring Period	Additions to AH Stock (Net of RtB)	LHNA ³⁶ AH Needs (Net)	Annual Shortfall / Surplus	Cumulative Shortfall / Surplus	Additions as a %age of Needs
2018/19	493	407	86	86	121%
2019/20	545	407	138	224	134%
2020/21	302	407	-105	119	74%
2021/22	339	407	-68	51	83%
Total	1,679	1,628	51	51	103%
Average / Annum	420	407	13		103%

³⁶ The LHNA AH need assessment is based upon the annual identified need figure set out in the SHMA Update 2020. It is noted that before 2020, the identified need figure relates to the SHMA (2016) at 132 affordable dwellings per annum.

- 5.9 During the LHNA (2020) assessment period to date, 103% of the identified need for affordable homes has been delivered within the Borough. This reflects the significant increase in delivery over the first two-years of the period. Nonetheless, as already demonstrated by this limited data set delivery of affordable housing has once again significantly decreased.
- 5.10 It is worthwhile further noting, as set out in Table 7, the Council's data identifies a significantly reduced rate of delivery of affordable housing within the Borough. Between 2018 – 2022, the Council's data reports the completion of just 1,123 net new affordable dwellings, 556 fewer affordable homes than Government data provides.
- 5.11 On the basis of the Council's figures, the completion of affordable homes within Wokingham Borough equates to just *circa* 69% of the identified affordable housing need within the LHNA (2020) over the same period.

Western Berkshire OAN Sensitivity Analysis (2018)

- 5.12 Table 13 (below) illustrates the net recorded affordable housing delivery compared to the Objectively Assessed Need ('OAN') for affordable housing for Wokingham Borough as identified within the Western Berkshire OAN Sensitivity Analysis (2018). The OAN Sensitivity Analysis (2018) identifies an OAN of 453 net affordable dwellings per annum between 2013 and 2036.

Table 13: Net Affordable Housing Additions Compared with Needs Identified in the OAN Sensitivity Analysis (2018)

Monitoring Period	Additions to AH Stock (Net)	SHMA ³⁷ AH Needs (Net)	Annual Shortfall / Surplus	Cumulative Shortfall / Surplus	Additions as a %age of Needs
2013/14	96	453	-357	-357	21%
2014/15	144	453	-309	-666	32%
2015/16	118	453	-335	-1,001	26%
2016/17	174	453	-279	-1,280	38%
2017/18	492	453	39	-1,241	109%
2018/19	493	453	40	-1,201	109%
2019/20	545	453	92	-1,109	120%
2020/21	302	453	-151	-1,260	67%
2021/22	339	453	-114	-1,374	75%
Total	2,703	4,077	-1374	-1,374	66%
Average / Annum	300	453	-153		66%

³⁷ The OAN Sensitivity Analysis AH Needs assessment is based upon the annual identified need figure set out in the Western Berkshire OAN Sensitivity Analysis (2018). It is noted that before 2018, the identified need figure relates to the SHMA (2016) at 441 affordable dwellings per annum.

- 5.13 Since the start of the SHMA (and OAN Sensitivity Analysis) period, affordable housing completions (net of Right to Buy) have been 300 net affordable homes per annum on average, against an identified need of 453 net affordable homes per annum.
- 5.14 Consequently, there is presently a cumulative shortfall of (negative) -1,374 affordable homes within Wokingham Borough over the 9-year period alone, equivalent to an average annual shortfall of -153 affordable homes. This shortfall would be further pronounced (to -2,044) when taking account of the Council's presented housing delivery data.
- 5.15 Measured against any of the requirements set out above, whether in the Core Strategy (2010), the LHNA (2020), or the OAN Sensitivity Analysis (2018) of the SHMA (2016), it is clear that Wokingham Borough as a whole has faced a chronic and persistent underprovision of affordable homes over any assessment period.

Affordable Housing Delivery in Finchampstead Parish

- 5.16 In accordance with the Council's Fol response (refer to **Appendix 2**), since the start of the LHNA (2020) period (2018 – 2022), a total of 165 new homes have been delivered within Finchampstead Parish³⁸.
- 5.17 If the Borough-wide rate of 28% affordable housing delivery is taken forward, it could reasonably be approximated that around 46 new affordable homes have been delivered in Finchampstead Parish within the LHNA (2020) period to date.
- 5.18 Over the same period, the Council's Fol response indicates that 1,206 new affordable homes have been delivered across the Borough. Consequently, a total of 4% of the Borough's affordable housing delivery has been within the Parish since the beginning of the LHNA (2020) period.
- 5.19 However, between 2010/11 and 2017/18, just 51 net new homes were delivered within the Parish. Assuming 28% of these were affordable, this provides an additional 14 affordable homes. As such, over the 12-year period (2010/11 – 2021/22), it can be estimated that a total of 60 new affordable homes have been delivered within Finchampstead Parish, equating to an average of just 5 new affordable homes per annum.

³⁸ The Council does not hold information relating to the delivery of affordable homes within Finchampstead South Ward specifically. As such, data is provided for Finchampstead Parish, which covers both Finchampstead North and Finchampstead South Wards.

Affordable Housing Delivery in Respect of Hybrid Planning Consent (O/2014/2179)

- 5.20 Table 1 of this report sets out the cumulative housing mix for Reserved Matters applications that have been permitted to date pursuant to Hybrid Planning Consent (reference: O/2014/2179). Together, the approved housing mix for Parcels 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 14 & 15 provide the overall mix of housing set out in Table 14 below.

Table 14: Summary of Housing Mix on Approved Reserved Matters Applications to date (05/01/2024)

No of Bedrooms	Affordable Homes		LHNA AH Target % Mix
1 Bed Flats / Houses	106	34%	20 – 25%
2 Bed Flats / Houses	130	42%	45 – 50%
3 Bed	60	19%	20 – 25%
4 Bed	13	4%	5 – 10%
Total	309		

- 5.21 Comparative analysis of the LHNA (2020) housing mix requirements against the overall approved housing mix pursuant to the Hybrid planning consent to date demonstrates good alignment with the LHNA (2020) identified mix. Importantly it also shows the LHNA's identified particular need for 1no. bed homes is currently in surplus, whereas there is further need for additional 2-bed homes as a proportion of the affordable housing mix.
- 5.22 With the proposed housing mix for Parcel 8 added to the existing secured mix across all other approved parcels to date, the cumulative secured mix would become:

Table 15: Summary of Reserved Matters Permissions to Date (as at 05/01/2024), plus Parcel 8 proposed mix

Type	Size	Market	Affordable	% of Affordable	Total
Apartments	1 bed	48	94	29%	142
	2 bed	41	81	25%	122
Houses	1 bed	0	12	4%	12
	2 bed	114	61	19%	175
	3 bed	246	63	19%	309
	4+ bed	154	13	4%	167
Total		603	324	100%	927

5.23 The below tables summarise the size mixes that will continue to be achieved:

Table 16: Affordable Housing Size Mix Alignment to Policy TB05 Intended – Approved Parcels 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 10,14 and 15, and including Parcel 8 As Proposed³⁹

Unit Size and % Suggested	Cumulative Current Secured Mix per Table 6	Cumulative Secured Mix with Parcel 8 Included per Table 7
1B (20%)	34%	33%
2B (45%)	42%	44%
3B (20%)	19%	19%
4B (15%)	4%	4%

Table 17: Affordable Housing Tenure Mix Alignment to the 2020 published LHNA - Approved Parcels 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 14 and 15, including Parcel 8 As Proposed

Unit Size and % Suggested	Cumulative Current Secured Mix per Table 6	Cumulative Secured Mix with Parcel 8 Included per Table 7
1B (20 – 25%)	34%	33%
2B (45 – 50%)	42%	44%
3B (20 - 25%)	19%	19%
4B (1 - 10%)	4%	4%

- 5.24 Table 17 demonstrates that, with respect to the overall cumulative affordable housing mix secured as part of Reserved Matters to date, the proposed mix at Parcel 8 actually improves the alignment of the Hybrid Permission site to the LHNA target mix. There is currently an overprovision of 1-bed affordable homes, and an underprovision of 2-bed homes across the site to date, which Parcel 8 is well-placed to assist in rebalancing. The relative % of 3 and 4-bed homes remains broadly unchanged from the existing cumulative situation.
- 5.25 The inclusion of the proposed housing mix at the application site would not materially affect this existing trend. Should the proposed development be approved, the existing overall housing mix would become: 33% for 1-bed homes, 44% for 2-bed homes, 19% for 3-bed homes, and 4% for 4-bed homes.
- 5.26 As such, the relative provision of the different sizes of homes would broadly remain the same, with an improvement in the provision of 1 and 2-bed homes toward their target percentage delivery. **The inclusion of the proposed development would therefore improve the alignment of the cumulative delivery of affordable housing with the need identified in the LHNA (2020).**

³⁹ Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Conclusions on Affordable Housing Delivery

- 5.27 The above evidence demonstrates that across Wokingham Borough, the overall delivery of affordable housing has persistently fallen short of meeting identified needs.
- 5.28 Measured against the Borough's adopted requirements for affordable housing, or any of the objective assessments of need, including within the LHNA (2020), the OAN Sensitivity Analysis (2018), or the SHMA (2016), it is clear that Wokingham Borough has, and continues to face, a chronic and persistent under-provision of affordable homes over a long period of time.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Barratt David Wilson Southern Counties ('BDW') proposes the development of 40 new homes, with 14 (35%) of these comprising affordable homes, on the land known as Parcel 8, Hogwood Farm, Sheerlands Road, pursuant to Hybrid planning consent (WBC reference: O/2014/2179 and 140647 - *as varied by 181194*).
- 6.2 To summarise the conclusions set out within the assessment, our analysis has identified that:
- i) The proposed tenure mix deviates from the target split of 58:12:30 (Social Rent : Affordable Rent : Shared Ownership), with a proposed split of 50:7:43 (Social Rent : Affordable Rent : Shared Ownership). However, given the scale of the site, the deviation relates to just two dwellings (-1 Social Rent, -1 Affordable Rent, and +2 Shared Ownership).
 - ii) There is a significant need for further affordable housing to be delivered both across Wokingham Borough as a whole, and specifically within Finchampstead Parish.
 - iii) Based on the most up-to-date published evidence within the LHNA (2020), there is a clear need for the provision of 2 bed affordable homes.
 - iv) To date, the cumulative delivery of affordable housing across the Reserved Matters parcels planning permissions subject to Hybrid planning permission at Hogwood Farm, Sheerlands Road (WBC reference: O/2014/2179 and 140647 - *as varied by 181194*) demonstrates good alignment with the target mix set out within the LHNA (2020): which provides the most up-to-date evidence of need in the Borough. The addition of Parcel 8 improves this alignment.
 - v) In isolation, the proposed housing mix for the application site is not aligned to the needs identified within the LHNA (2020). Nonetheless, the site's context (its relatively limited size as a parcel, in combination with its central location) is not considered to align with achieving an LHNA (2020) compliant housing mix.
 - vi) Furthermore, the divergence of the proposed housing mix from the LHNA (2020) identified need is not considered to be so significant as to result in a material change in the cumulative mix provided within the overall site to date, which including the proposed unit mix would remain well-aligned.
 - vii) The evidence is clear and compelling. There is an acute shortfall in delivery of affordable housing against objectively identified needs across the Borough and within Finchampstead Ward. Although in isolation the application site's contribution to the overall affordable housing stock is 14 homes, the delivery of those additional affordable homes will be of significant value to those in need; given the various market indicators showing high levels of unaffordability within the Borough and a substantial number of households with an identified need and preference for affordable housing in this location.

- 6.3 In deriving these conclusions, our assessment has drawn on a significant range of data and sources. The following discussion sets out a brief summary of the data and findings set out in the various sections of the report.

Affordable Housing Tenure

- 6.4 BDW proposes 35% affordable housing provision on-site, which meets the requirements of adopted Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy (2010) and TB05 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014). It also meets the requirements set out in proposed Policy H5 of the emerging Local Plan Update (2018 - 2036).
- 6.5 The proposed affordable housing tenure split comprises 43% Shared Ownership (6 homes), 7% Affordable Rented (1 homes) and 50% Social Rented (7 homes), which broadly aligns with the provisions of the Borough's development plan, the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document ('AHSPD') and, most importantly, the Affordable Housing Schedule approved pursuant to the Outline Planning Permission (O/2014/2179 and 140647 - *as varied by 181194*).
- 6.6 The deviation from the identified tenure preference of 58:12:30 (Social Rent : Affordable Rent: Shared Ownership) relates to just two dwellings (-1 Social Rent, -1 Affordable Rent, and +2 Shared Ownership) which, in the context of the cumulative extant permitted extent of the wider site, is not considered to be of such consequence that the grant of planning permission should not be forthcoming on this basis.

Planning Policy Position

- 6.7 The Development Plan for Wokingham Borough comprises the adopted Core Strategy 2006 – 2026 (adopted 2010), the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014), and the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan (2023).
- 6.8 The Borough has an adopted Affordable Housing SPD (2013). The document was adopted in 2013, some 10 years ago. Furthermore, the evidence which was relied upon to inform its analysis pre-dated this by some 1 to 11 years, including assessments ranging between 2002 and 2012. The conclusions of the SPD are therefore considered to be considerably out of date.
- 6.9 Section 2 of this Statement has considered the adopted policy position in relation to the provision of affordable housing, alongside the wide range of other plans, strategies, and guidance that clearly demonstrate the provision of affordable housing has long been a key priority for Wokingham Borough Council.

Affordable Housing Needs

- 6.10 The LHNA (2020) identifies a total annualised requirement of up to 407 affordable dwellings per annum in Wokingham Borough, for the 18-year period 2018 – 2036. This comprises the most recent assessment of affordable housing need for Wokingham Borough.

Affordable Housing Delivery

- 6.11 Analysis of the Borough's affordable housing completions (net) over the 16-year Core Strategy period to date (2006/7 to 2021/22), utilising data recorded by DLUHC, demonstrates a shortfall in the delivery of affordable homes by -1,949, against an identified need of 5,296 over the same period. This equates to an average annual deficit of -122 affordable dwellings in the borough over the Core Strategy period to date.
- 6.12 Similar analysis in relation to the LHNA (2020) period to date (2018/19 – 2021/22) indicates that the Borough has delivered 109% of its affordable housing need over the same period. However, undertaking the same analysis utilising the Council's housing data indicates that delivery has actually provided just 69% of its affordable need over the same period.
- 6.13 Analysis of recorded housing completions (net) over the 9-year SHMA (2018) period between 2013/14 – 2021/22 demonstrates a shortfall in the delivery of affordable housing of some (minus) -1,374 affordable homes (net) against the identified need of 4,077 over the same period. This equates to an average annual deficit in the delivery of affordable homes of (minus) -153 over the SHMA (2018) period to date.

Affordability Indicators

- 6.14 Further to the existing shortfall in the Borough's delivery of affordable homes against objectively assessed need, other indicators further point to an affordability crisis in Wokingham Borough. Set out below are the key findings in respect of housing affordability across Wokingham Borough:

Housing Needs

- As at 31st March 2022, there were 2,420 households on the Housing Register.
- Of these, 998 (41%) households expressed a preference for housing in Finchampstead Parish.
- Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, there were 116 households on the Housing Register being housed in temporary accommodation within the Borough.
- Between April 2021 and March 2022, the Council accepted 170 households in need of homelessness prevention duty, and a further 206 households in need of relief duty from the Council.

Private Rental Market

- Median private rent of £1,100 pcm in 2021/22 in Wokingham Borough is 16% higher than the South East figure of £950 pcm and 38% higher than the national figure of £795 pcm.
- Lower Quartile private rent of £895 pcm in 2021/22 in Wokingham Borough is 15% higher than the equivalent South East figure of £775 pcm and 50% higher than the national figure of £595 pcm.

House Prices

- The lower quartile workplace-based affordability ratio in Wokingham Borough of 14.37 stands significantly above the South East average of 11.23 and almost double the national average of 8.04.
- In 2022, lower quartile house prices in Finchampstead South Ward (£370,000) were 5% higher than across Wokingham Borough (£353,000), 41% higher than across the South East (£263,000) and 106% higher than the national figure (£180,000).

6.15 All these factors combine to create a challenging situation for anybody in need of affordable housing to rent or to buy in Finchampstead Parish / Finchampstead South Ward, as well as in Wokingham Borough more generally.

Conclusions

6.16 There are serious and persistent affordability challenges across Wokingham Borough. This is exemplified by the affordability indicators, which show a poor and worsening affordability across the District.

6.17 It is the opinion of Boyer that there is an acute housing crisis in Wokingham Borough, with an average lower quartile house price to average income ratio of 14.37. Mortgage lending is typically offered on the basis of up to 4.5 times earnings (subject to individual circumstances). Here, the affordability ratio is three times higher than that and rising.

6.18 The provision of 14 new affordable homes will mean that 14 households needing affordable housing will spend less time on the waiting list and in potentially unsuitable accommodation. This will improve the lives of those real households who will benefit from the provision of high quality, affordable homes that meet their needs.

6.19 The affordable housing benefits of the application scheme are therefore:

- 35% (14 dwellings) of the scheme provided as affordable housing which meets the requirements of both adopted and emerging planning policy;
- A deliverable scheme which provides much needed affordable homes;
- In a sustainable location;
- With the affordable homes managed by a Registered Provider;
- Which provide better quality affordable homes; and
- Greater security of tenure than the private rented sector.

6.20 Given the conclusions set out in this analysis, there can be no doubt that the provision of 14 affordable dwellings on this site to help those in acute need in Wokingham Borough should be afforded **significant** weight in the determination of any application.

6.21 Boyer therefore recommends that the proposed development is granted consent, to enable the prompt delivery of much-needed affordable housing.

APPENDIX 1 – SITE LOCATION PLAN

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Kestrel Buildings

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Application Boundary

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APPENDIX 2 – FREEDOM OF INFORMATION RESPONSE

WBCIR:16714

Housing Register

- 1) Number of households on the Council's Housing Register as at 31st March 2022

2420

- 2) Average waiting times as at **31 March 2022** for the following types of affordable property across the Authority area:

We do not produce average wait times/ anticipated wait times as we run an individual short list for each void property against those that are eligible for that specific property and have that area of choice selected, in order of banding and waiting time, which will be different for each individual property.

Property Type	Answer
1-bed Affordable Dwelling	
2-bed Affordable Dwelling	
3-bed Affordable Dwelling	
4-bed Affordable Dwelling	

- 3) Average waiting times as at **31 March 2021** for the following types of affordable property across the Authority area:

We do not produce average wait times/ anticipated wait times as we run an individual short list for each void property against those that are eligible for that specific property and have that area of choice selected, in order of banding and waiting time, which will be different for each individual property.

Property Type	Answer
1-bed Affordable Dwelling	
2-bed Affordable Dwelling	
3-bed Affordable Dwelling	
4+ bed Affordable Dwelling	

- 4) Number of households on the Council's Housing Register as at 31 March 2022 specifying the following areas as their preferred choice of location:

Please note that households choose areas of the borough and not wards so we can only provide data for Finchampstead as a whole, Barkham and Wokingham Without are separate areas so we can provide this.

Location	Household Preferences (31 March 2022)
Finchampstead	998
Barkham Ward	1011
Wokingham Without Ward	920

- 5) Number of households on the Council's Housing Register, as at 31st March 2022, specifying the following tenure as their preferred choice:

We do not give applicants a choice of tenure so unable to provide this

Tenure	Household Preferences (31 March 2022)
Social Rented	
Intermediate Rented	
Shared Ownership	

- 6) Number of bids made for the following tenures of affordable property listed below:

We do not operate a bidding system/ choice based lettings

Tenure	Household Preferences (1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022)
Social Rented	
Intermediate Rented	
Shared Ownership	

- 7) Average number of bids per property for the following types of affordable property in the locations listed below:

We do not operate a bidding system/ choice based lettings

Type of Affordable Property	Average Bids Per Property (1 st April 2021 to 31 st March 2022)			
	Finchampstead North Ward	Finchampstead South Ward	Barkham Ward	Wokingham Without Ward
1-bed Affordable Dwelling				
2-bed Affordable Dwelling				
3-bed Affordable Dwelling				
4+ bed Affordable Dwelling				

Social Housing Stock

- 8) Total social housing dwelling stock at 31st March 2022:

Location	Total Social Housing Stock (At 31 March 2022)
Finchampstead North Ward	297 (all of Finchampstead) Data does not distinguish between North and South ward
Finchampstead South Ward	
Barkham Ward	5
Wokingham Without Ward	23

Social Housing Lettings

- 9) Number of social housing lettings made:

Location	Social Housing Lettings	
	1 st April 2020 to 31 st March 2021	1 st April 2021 to 31 st March 2022
Finchampstead	17	55
Barkham	0	0
Wokingham Without	1	3

10) Number of social housing lettings made in the Authority area:

From November 2020 Help to Buy South updated their portal in line with GDPR regulation which meant WBC no longer had access to Help to Buy and applications therefore we cannot provide the data for shared ownership after November 2020 apart from shared ownership extra care properties

Tenure	Lettings Made (1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021)	Lettings Made (1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022)
Social Rented	299	289
Intermediate Rented	28	65
Shared Ownership	April – Nov 2020 - 62	8 shared ownerships extra care but no longer had access to Help to Buy portal so unable to confirm number of Housing Association shared ownerships

Temporary Accommodation

11) Number of households on the **Housing Register** housed in temporary accommodation:

Location	Households in Temporary Accommodation	
	1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021	1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022
Within Wokingham Borough	125	116
Outside of Wokingham Borough	0	0

Location	Households in Bed and Breakfast	
	1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021	1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022
Within Wokingham Borough	24	72
Outside of Wokingham Borough	140	95

Homelessness

- 12) Number of homelessness applications within the last 12 months, which the Council has assessed as having:

Type of Application	Number of Applications Accepted
A Prevention Duty	170
A Relief Duty	206

Please specify which 12-month period has been used: **April 22 – March 23**

Housing Completions

- 13) Number of **net** housing completions within Wokingham Borough:

Monitoring Period	Number of Homes Completed (net) in Wokingham Borough
2010/11	217
2011/12	267
2012/13	390
2013/14	488
2014/15	454
2015/16	675
2016/17	967
2017/18	1528
2018/19	1284
2019/20	1555
2020/21	1167
2021/22	1385
2022/23	*We have not finalised these numbers yet

- 14) Number of affordable homes completed within Wokingham Borough:

Monitoring Period	Number of Affordable Homes Completed (net) in Wokingham Borough
2010/11	70
2011/12	146
2012/13	91
2013/14	108
2014/15	95
2015/16	123
2016/17	212
2017/18	482
2018/19	365

2019/20	465
2020/21	187
2021/22	189
2022/23	106

Please note we do not monitor the net number of affordable housing completions, only the total number of affordable housing completions in the Borough. The total numbers are as follows:

15) Number of housing completions in the locations set out below:

Monitoring Period	Number of Homes Completed (net)		
	Finchampstead Parish	Barkham Parish	Wokingham Without Parish
2010/11	12	3	2
2011/12	3	0	1
2012/13	7	2	-1
2013/14	2	2	2
2014/15	-4	3	3
2015/16	-4	0	1
2016/17	38	25	0
2017/18	-3	0	51
2018/19	-5	76	39
2019/20	49	144	38
2020/21	34	266	2
2021/22	87	202	2
2022/23			
*The council does not keep ward data. We compile data by Parish and have given the net Parish completions for the Parishes that the vast majority of the ward falls under.			

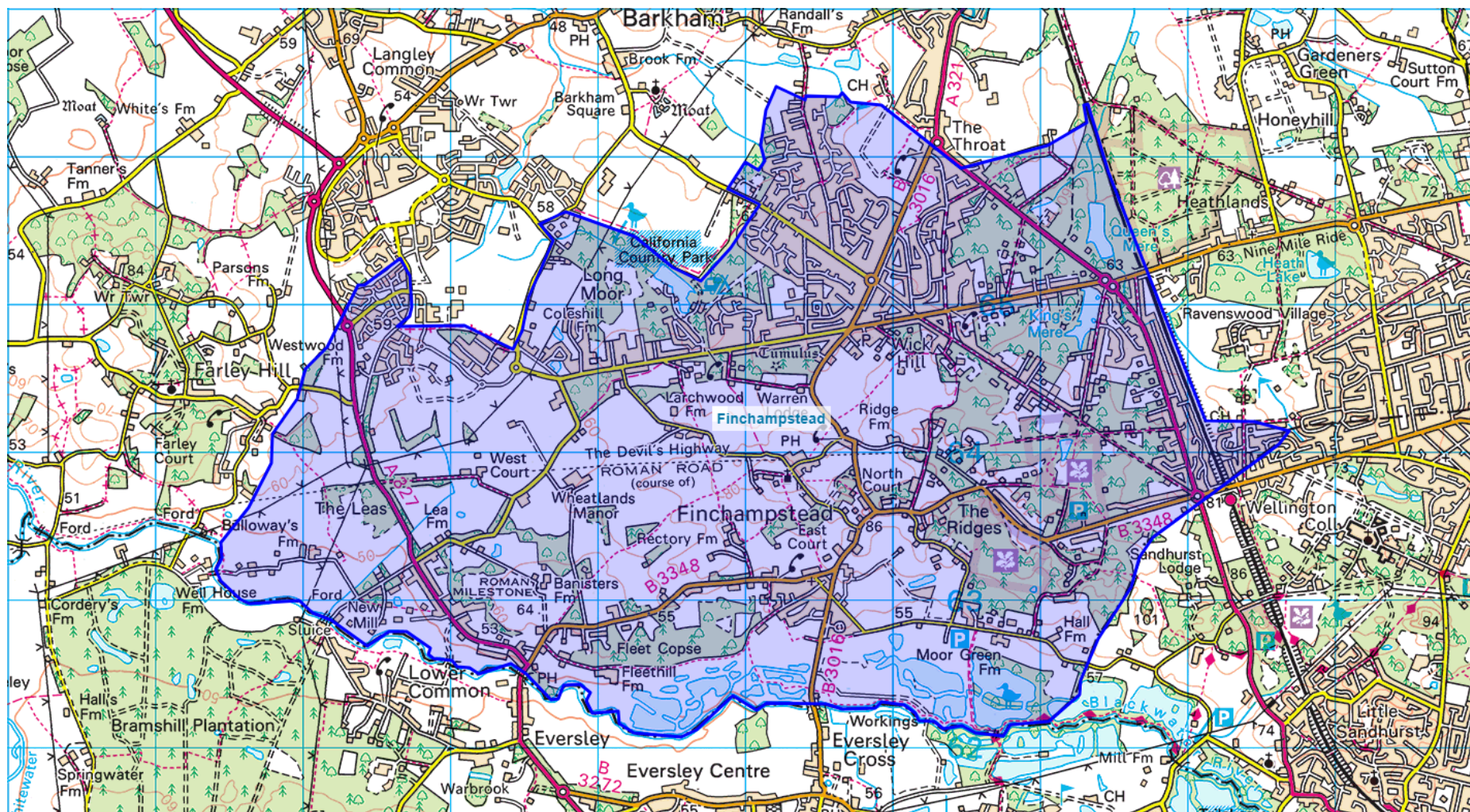
16) Number of **affordable** housing completions:

We do not hold completion data by ward, only by generic site names as given to us by the Registered Providers who own the relevant affordable homes in each location. The task of going back to cross reference each site against the relevant planning applications and wards would exceed 18 hours of work to complete and may not be possible due to changes in monitoring systems over the past 10+ years.

Monitoring Period	Number of Affordable Homes Completed (net)			
	Finchampstead North Ward	Finchampstead South Ward	Barkham Ward	Wokingham Without Ward
2010/11				
2011/12				
2012/13				
2013/14				
2014/15				
2015/16				
2016/17				
2017/18				
2018/19				
2019/20				
2020/21				
2021/22				
2022/23				

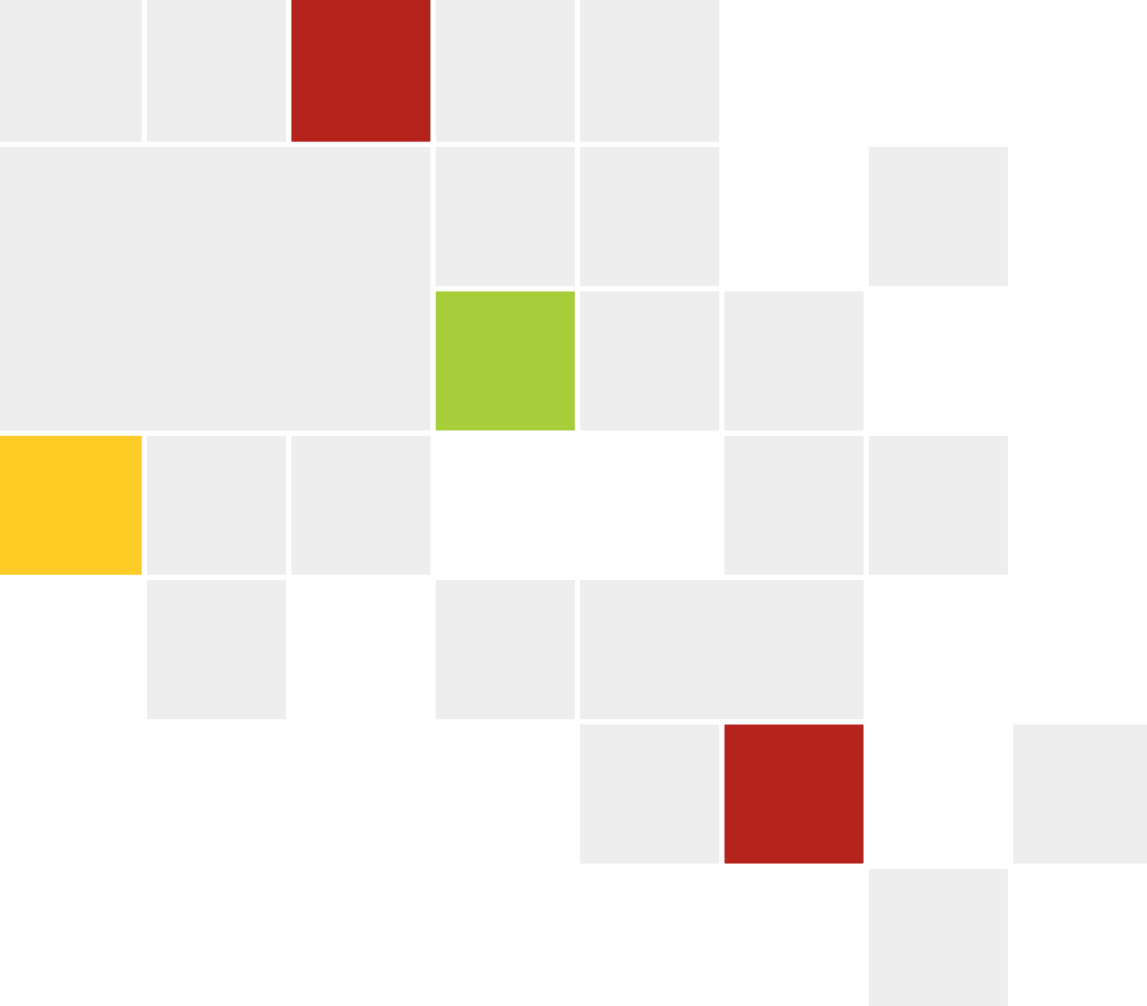
APPENDIX 3 – FINCHAMPSTEAD SOUTH WARD AREA

Appendix 3 - Finchampstead Parish Boundary



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Source: <https://maps.walkingclub.org.uk/admin/wokingham/finchampstead-parish.html>



Boyer

Crowthorne House, Nine Mile Ride, Wokingham, RG40 3GZ | 01344 753 220
wokingham@boyerplanning.co.uk | boyerplanning.co.uk