

Appendix 6.1 – Policy SS13 – Loddon Garden Village

1. The area identified as Loddon Valley Garden Village Strategic Development Location, as shown on the policies map, is allocated for a beautifully and imaginatively designed community including housing, employment, social and physical infrastructure.

2. The garden village will be delivered in accordance with the development, place shaping, and delivery principles set out below.

Development principles

Phased delivery of:

- a) Around 3,930 dwellings, of which at least 2,700 dwellings will be delivered by 31st March 2040, including:
 - i. 40% affordable homes, in accordance with Policy H3;
 - ii. 100 custom and self build serviced plots;
 - iii. 20 Gypsy and Traveller pitches; and
 - iv. Specialist accommodation, including accommodation for older persons.
- b) Around 100,000 m² of research and development floorspace or equivalent trip generating activity within use class E(g), B2, B8 and other complementary uses, through an extension to the Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park.
- c) Schools, including:
 - i. Two 3-form entry primary schools (including appropriate onsite early years provision); and
 - ii. An 8-form entry secondary school, with additional land reserved to enable expansion to 12-form entry with sixth form.

Each school should include space for the integrated teaching of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.
- d) A district centre providing a range of services and facilities in a location central to the planned housing, to include retail, leisure, employment, cultural, and health uses;
- e) Two local centres providing day to day retail and other local community uses;
- f) A multi-functional country park which is accessible to settlements beyond the garden village; and
- g) A solution to avoid or mitigate the impact of development upon the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area through the provision of sufficient Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) (subject to monitoring of the quality and quantity standards).

Place shaping principles

3. The siting, layout, and form of development, including landscaping should:

- a) Draw on and enhance the site's context, changes in topography and its considerable natural assets such as the River Loddon and Barkham Brook, irreplaceable habitats, and hedgerows, trees, woodland and other features;
- b) Protect and retain the permanent physical and visual sense of separation of Arborfield and the defined settlements of Arborfield Cross and Shinfield;
- c) Be designed around a series of walkable neighbourhoods, each providing a range of accessible services and facilities. Where important local facilities are necessarily located beyond the neighbourhood, these should be linked by accessible and attractive routes which support and encourage active travel. The promotion of community facilities for shared use, such as outdoor and indoor sports and leisure provision will be strongly encouraged;
- d) Establish a comprehensive and integrated network of high-quality and attractive active travel routes, greenways and bus services within the garden village and to destinations in the wider area;
- e) Incorporate measures to protect the separate identity of Carter's Hill;
- f) Incorporate measures to conservation and enhancement of heritage assets, including listed buildings, through appropriate design and the provision of sufficient space;
- g) Locate district and local centres where they are accessible to the planned housing, and are of an appropriate scale to meet the day-to-day needs with a range of retail (including food store of around 2,500m²), leisure, cultural, community, health and service facilities;
- h) Locate higher development densities around the district and local centres, transport nodes, and along public transport routes subject to site specific sensitivities such as landscape, character and heritage;
- i) Locate new buildings, except those for water compatible uses, outside areas of flood risk, with development planned for sequentially, by placing the most vulnerable development in the lowest areas of flood risk; and
- j) Draw on the recreational and ecological opportunities of the River Loddon and Barkham Brook to create a multi-functional country park which provides coherent ecological networks, recreational opportunities and active travel connectivity.

Delivery principles

4. The delivery of the garden village must be supported by a comprehensive package of infrastructure to support a self-sustaining, thriving and healthy community including the following.

Masterplanning

5. To ensure that development comes forward in a strategic, coordinated and comprehensive manner, delivery should be led by a single agreed vision and masterplan for the whole garden village that demonstrates how the principles established in this policy and supporting guidance in Appendix C have been considered to ensure high quality development. The masterplan must be produced in partnership between the council, developers, landowners and key stakeholders, and involve consultation with the local community. Development proposals on individual land parcels must accord with the principles and requirements set out in the agreed vision and masterplan. The masterplan must provide:

- a) A coordinated and comprehensive landscape led approach to development of the whole Loddon Valley Garden Village to avoid piecemeal and ad-hoc development proposals;
- b) A strategy for the quantum and distribution of land uses, access points, design and layout principles (including a strategic design code) which draws on a detailed understanding of the area's characteristics, opportunities and constraints;
- c) A strategy for the timely delivery of facilities and infrastructure necessary to support each phase of delivery and the garden village as a whole;
- d) A strategy for creating a distinctive and sustainable community, embracing the best of town and country and that delivers climate resilience; and
- e) A strategy for integrating and implementing arts and cultural activities including public art.

Landscape and green and blue infrastructure

6. Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive strategic landscape and green and blue infrastructure strategy that:

- a) Provides a new country park incorporating the River Loddon and Barkham Brook that contributes to, and enhances, coherent ecological networks and habitats, which are integrated into the wider green and blue infrastructure beyond the garden village;
- b) Protects and enhances the identified attributes of the River Loddon Valued Landscape and Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape;
- c) Provide a network of connected, accessible and high-quality open spaces that includes tree lined streets, opportunities for local food growing and natural play, that integrate with the wider green and blue infrastructure network;
- d) Retains, and incorporates appropriate buffers for, ancient woodland, ancient or veteran trees, watercourses, hedgerows, and other trees into the connected green and blue infrastructure of the site;
- e) Provides a network of safe, attractive, landscaped and accessible public rights of way across the site, and where appropriate demonstrates how they connect into the existing rights of way network;
- f) Contributes to establishing the Loddon long distance footpath for active travel; and
- g) Establishes clear and robust arrangements for future maintenance.

Drainage and flood alleviation

7. Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive drainage and flood alleviation strategy that:

- a) Provides high quality sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) that are integrated into the wider landscape and green and blue infrastructure strategy, including mitigation at source and makes a positive contribution to attractive open spaces, and improvement to biodiversity and water quality;
- b) Considers and takes opportunity as appropriate to improve the management of flood risk and reduce the risk of flooding to areas beyond the garden village; and
- c) Establishes clear and robust arrangements for future maintenance.

Biodiversity

8. Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive ecological strategy that:

- a) Achieves a measurable biodiversity net gain of at least 20% as calculated using the latest statutory metric;
- b) Shows how priority habitats and ecological features will be protected and enhanced, having particular regard to any Biodiversity Action Plan and Local Nature Recovery Strategy priorities;
- c) Provide a suitable buffer between the built development and ecological areas, including (but not limited to) Local Wildlife Sites, areas of irreplaceable habitat and areas of priority habitat; and
- d) Provide measures to avoid and mitigate the impact of development on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. This will include the provision of sufficient and accessible Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace on-site (as set out in Policy NE3).

Housing

9. Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive housing strategy that:

- a) Provides a mix of housing types, sizes (including those suitable for extended family living), and tenures that reflect the identified housing needs and demands as set out in the council's most up to date evidence of housing need;
- b) Applies designs which support spaces suitable for home working; and c) Shows how the mix of housing types, sizes and tenures will be coordinated through each phase of delivery.

Employment and Jobs

10. Development proposals should contribute towards a wide range and mix of employment, skills and training opportunities in different sectors of the economy, including small-scale business space and small/medium sized flexible units, within district and local centres as appropriate.

Sustainable design and construction

11. Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive energy and sustainability strategy that:

- a) Applies passive design principles to ensure that form, orientation, building typologies, development densities and green and blue infrastructure are appropriately used to reduce energy demand and deliver climate resilient neighbourhoods;
- b) Implements the energy hierarchy at all scales and demonstrates a fabric first approach;
- c) Ensures that the total operational energy demand at completion of the Loddon Valley Garden Village is met from renewable or low-carbon sources on site, prioritising opportunities for heat networks, community energy initiatives or other solutions which take advantage of the scale of the development;
- d) Provides measures to reduce the whole-life impacts by creating adaptable, durable buildings and employing construction methods and materials which minimise embodied emissions; and
- e) Provide measures to reduce water consumption.

Transport

12. Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive sustainable transport strategy that has been informed by a detailed Transport Assessment and:

- a) Provides layouts, street designs and associated measures that are safe, suitable and convenient for all users, that prioritise active travel, and facilitates high quality public transport services both within and to key destinations beyond the garden village. This will include:

The phased delivery of active travel and public transport measures;

An on-site dedicated network of segregated facilities for pedestrians and cyclists that integrate with active travel networks, including the Public Rights of Way network; and

The provision of new and improved off-site connections for pedestrians and cyclists, providing safe, suitable and convenient access to the surrounding communities, facilities, services and employment opportunities including the Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park, Park and Ride, Green Park, Green Park Station, Shinfield, Lower Earley, Winnersh and Winnersh Triangle Station.

- b) Demonstrates that the design of the access arrangements and the associated highway improvements take into account all the planned development; and
- c) Ensures that development will not have a severe adverse impact on the local and strategic highway networks, nor an unacceptable impact upon highway safety, following the inclusion of suitable measures to mitigate the impact.



5.109 Loddon Valley Garden Village will be a holistically planned, beautifully designed, and sustainable new community. The site, which will align to the principles and qualities for Garden Communities¹, will make provision for around 3,930 new homes alongside employment and a range of services and facilities. Of the total number of homes, a minimum of 2,700 are expected to be completed within the period to 2040.

5.110 Loddon Valley Garden Village should be a place where people will want to live, where they feel healthy and happy, and which provides opportunities for communities to prosper and flourish. The new settlement will comprise 40% affordable homes, include local services and facilities to minimise the need for unnecessary travel, and where travel is required, support opportunities to do this by active means such as walking, wheeling and cycling. The country park will provide recreational opportunities for the new community as well as those nearby, and significant biodiversity improvements.

5.111 An integral element of the new garden village is the provision of homes in proximity to jobs with the location incorporating the existing Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park, a location which includes a mix of science and technology, film studios, educational and health uses. In providing new homes in proximity to key job locations, it is not assumed that all residents would work in the immediate area but the approach provides a clear opportunity to reduce travel compared to other approaches. It is accepted that wider travel will always be necessary and must be planned for.

5.112 The scale and complexity of the garden village requires that development comes forward in a coordinated manner and led by a single agreed vision. The new community will be supported by a comprehensive package of infrastructure to incentivise sustainable behaviours and travel choices. This will include a framework to maximise opportunities for active travel within the new community and between the surrounding places (including a new connection over the M4 to Earley), primary schools and a secondary school, and district and local centres.

5.113 An integral element of the garden village is the creation of a country park along the River Loddon Valley, an area currently without public access. This will facilitate wider public access along the river corridor and to open space in the wider area. The river corridor provides a significant opportunity for comprehensive habitat management, restoration and enhancement, improving biodiversity.

5.114 Further guidance to Policy SS13 is set out in Appendix C. Further guidance may be prepared in due course to ensure the additional development continues to reflect the key principles and concept. Defined settlement areas have been defined on the Policies Map which reflect areas where building is anticipated based on the concept plan. The council recognises that these areas are indicative and that masterplanning will establish where building will occur in more detail. The Policies Map will be updated in the future once there is greater certainty.

¹ Town and Country Planning Association (2017) Garden Villages Guidance; Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018) Prospectus on 'Garden Communities'