

**Gleeson Land Limited**

# Newlands Farm, Arborfield

**Planning Statement**

**In support of an Outline Planning Application for up to 430 sustainable new homes as part of Loddon Valley Garden Village**

**November 2025**

PREPARED FOR

**gleeson**  
PLC



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## Document History

Issue	Date	Issued by	Comment
1.0	05/11/2025	JG	First Issue to Gleeson

# 1. Introduction

1.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Savills on behalf of Gleeson Land Limited (hereafter "Gleeson"), the Applicant for an Outline planning application for the southern sector of a sustainable new Garden Community known as the Loddon Valley Garden Village ("LVGV"). This comprises a residential-led mixed use development on land designated as a Strategic Development Location (SDL) in the emerging Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update via Policy SS13<sup>1</sup>.

1.1.2 Through the preparation and submission of this application, Gleeson has worked in close co-operation with the University of Reading ('UoR') and Hatch Farm Land Limited (HFLL), along with the Seal family, Brazil family and Foxcroft family that control other parts of the allocation site. Gleeson's application is closely related to a separate application recently submitted by the UoR, comprising 2,800 new homes and other key elements of SS13 including roads, bridges, schools, sports facilities, local centres, and SANG. This application was registered in October 2025 (ref: 252498). A planning application on behalf of HFLL is expected to be submitted in Spring 2026. These planning applications will ensure that the LVGV (excluding the Thames Valley Science Park) is delivered in a comprehensive manner.

1.1.3 Working together, the landowners' co-ordinated planning applications will deliver a new Garden community comprising new housing, a large area of ecological mitigation and recreational land around the River Loddon known as 'Eco Valley', and a range of services, facilities and employment opportunities in a highly sustainable location that will not only address the housing and employment needs of the Borough in the next Local Plan period (to 2040), but also contribute significantly towards meeting needs in the period beyond that. A full description of the Site and the proposed development is provided in Sections 3 and 4 of this Planning Statement.

1.1.4 The purpose of this Planning Statement is to:

- set out the planning context for the Site and the proposed development;
- describe the proposed development, the Site and surrounding area;
- assess the conformity of the proposal with relevant development plan policy and material considerations;
- review the technical surveys underpinning the proposal;
- assess the benefits of the proposed development;
- consider the approach to planning conditions and planning obligations; and
- consider the planning balance.

1.1.5 It concludes that this application is fully consistent with emerging LPU policy, which should be afforded substantial weight, and that there is an array of positive social, economic and environmental benefits that would accrue as a result of this application. Relevant development plan policies are 'out of date', and the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' therefore applies in Wokingham Borough, pursuant to NPPF paragraph 11d. Hence, it is wholly appropriate for this planning application to be approved at the earliest opportunity.

1.1.6 This Planning Statement refers to, and should be read in conjunction with, an array of supporting documents submitted with this application. In particular, reference should be made to those items referred to in the list below. However, reference should also be made to a fully detailed schedule of all application documents and drawings, which is provided in the covering letter.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2024-10/Local%20Plan%20Update%20-%20Regulation%2019%20Plan.pdf>

Table 1.1: Core application documents relating to this Planning Statement

Document / Drawing	Author
Site Location Plan	Thrive
Design and Access Statement	Thrive
Parameter Plans	Thrive
Landscape Design Proposals	Savills
Environmental Statement, including an assessment of the below topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ch 7 - Air Quality and odour</li> <li>▪ Ch 8 - Archaeology</li> <li>▪ Ch 9 - Built Heritage</li> <li>▪ Ch 10 - Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases</li> <li>▪ Ch 11 - Ecology</li> <li>▪ Ch 12 - Human Health</li> <li>▪ Ch 13 - Hydrology (Flood risk and drainage)</li> <li>▪ Ch 14 - Landscape and Visual Impact</li> <li>▪ Ch 15 - Noise and Vibration</li> <li>▪ Ch 17 - Transport and access</li> <li>▪ Ch 18 - Summary of mitigation, residual and interactive effects</li> <li>▪ Ch 16 - Socio-economics</li> </ul>	Savills plus multiple authors
The Environmental Statement also comprises a substantial suite of technical appendices, and a Non-Technical Summary.	
Transport Assessment	iTransport
Flood Risk Assessment	Abley Letchford
Proposed Highway Plans	iTransport
Proposed Drainage Plans	Abley Letchford
Affordable Housing Statement	Pioneer
Arboricultural Assessment	Aspect Arboriculture
Statement of Community Engagement	Meeting Place

1.1.7 This planning application has been produced in light of extensive engagement by Gleeson and the other Landowners with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), statutory bodies and other stakeholders since 2021, throughout the preparation of the LPU which allocates the Site for development. As described in this document, this has been a comprehensive and positive process resulting in a scheme that fulfils all of WBC's objectives.

1.1.8 This Planning Statement is structured as follows:

- **Section 2:** introduces Gleeson Land Limited and its track record for delivering development;
- **Section 3:** provides the Site context;
- **Section 4:** describes the Proposed Development;
- **Section 5:** provides a summary of the Environmental Impact Assessment process;
- **Section 6:** summarises pre-application stakeholder engagement and public consultation;
- **Section 7:** reviews relevant Development Plan policies and material considerations;
- **Section 8:** establishes the principle of development;
- **Section 9:** addresses the Technical Assessments that support the planning application;

- **Section 10:** provides the Housing Statement;
- **Section 11:** sets out the benefits associated with the planning application;
- **Section 12:** considers planning conditions and obligations;
- **Section 13:** sets out the Planning Balance;
- **Section 14:** concludes the Planning Statement and case for granting permission.

1.1.9 This Planning Statement includes the following appendices:

- **Appendix 1:** Copy of LPU Policy SS13; and
- **Appendix 2:** Extract from the LPU Policies Map.
- **Appendix 3:** Abbreviations

## 2. About Gleeson Land Limited

### 2.1 Overview

2.1.1 Established in the 1990s, Gleeson Land is part of the MJ Gleeson plc which has been creating much needed new homes, communities, and their facilities for local people for almost 120 years. As part of MJ Gleeson plc, Gleeson Land has the strength to invest for the long term and find the right solutions to unlock even the most complex of sites, focused primarily on securing residential planning permissions. Gleeson Land is committed to realising the development potential of land in sustainable locations to provide high quality new homes in attractive environments where people want to live and relax. They are passionate about making a difference through creating sustainable places.

2.1.2 Gleeson is experienced in supporting the delivery of new housing in Wokingham Borough. A particular example of this is at *Matthewsgreen Farm*, which is part of the North Wokingham Strategic Development Location, which was allocated for development in 2010. This comprised a phased development of around 760 dwellings including assisted living units, local centre, primary school, community facilities and public open space. The development came forward along with a comprehensive EIA allied to a wider masterplan. The application was successfully approved in 2015 and has now been built out.



Figure 2.1: Part of the Matthewsgreen development, Wokingham

2.1.3 Gleeson Land has a long-term interest in the site at Loddon Garden Village, the freehold of which is in private ownership and will apply these same core principles to the delivery of new homes at Newlands Farm, as part of the wider LVGV.

2.1.4 Gleeson's partners, including the UoR and HFLL also have a strong track record in delivering on their commitments through the planning process, which can be seen through many successful developments within Wokingham Borough and more widely.

## 3. Site Context

### 3.1 Site Location

- 3.1.1 The Site is located on the southern edge of the LPU, Policy SS13 LVGV allocation, a short distance to the northeast of the village of Arborfield, which is around five miles southeast of Reading and four miles west of Wokingham. It is set within the Borough of Wokingham and Parish of Arborfield and Newland.
- 3.1.2 Mole Road, (B3030) runs along the south-eastern boundary of the Site and Church Lane to the south-west.
- 3.1.3 Further to the south is the Arborfield Green SDL – a development of 3,500 homes allocated in the Core Strategy (2010), comprising the redevelopment of the former Garrison site. This is well advanced with building having commenced in 2016 and has now delivered over 1,600 homes. Further to the west of the Site is the South of the M4 SDL, also allocated by the Core Strategy. This comprises some 2,500 homes and is also now substantially complete.
- 3.1.4 The Coombes C of E Primary School is located around 0.7 miles to the south, with Farley Hill Primary School around 1.5 miles to the southeast within Arborfield Green. The nearest secondary school is currently Bohunt School, located around 2 miles to the south. Arborfield Village Montessori Nursery is approximately 0.5 miles from the Site along Sindlesham Road.
- 3.1.5 Arborfield Cross offers a village shop, a garage (with car wash services), the Bull Inn pub, and the Henry Street Garden Centre.
- 3.1.6 Arborfield Green also provides a Co-op foodstore, a doctors' surgery, a library, community and leisure centre.

### 3.2 Site Description

- 3.2.1 The Site is approximately 23.35 hectares in size and comprises agricultural land, the majority of which consists of four separate fields defined by mature hedgerows. A cluster of trees define the wider landscape on Cartershill Lane, to the west of the Site lies Brickyard Plantation. The eastern boundary is defined by a strong landscape buffer with mature oak trees are distributed amongst mature hedgerows to the edges around the Site.

### 3.3 Access

- 3.3.1 The Site is well related to the local and regional road network, lying around 3 miles east of Junction 11 of the M4 with Junction 10 around 3.5 miles northeast, where access to the A239(M) is also taken.
- 3.3.2 Horseman Coaches operates bus service 145, which runs between Three Mile Cross Post Office, Wokingham, and Winnersh from Mole Road. From the centre of Arborfield, regular bus services run from Arborfield to Reading and Wokingham, from which regular railway services are available to London and other regional towns and cities.
- 3.3.3 There are no public footpaths running through the Site although a byway that connects Arborfield with Carter's Hill, ARBO3, runs adjacent to the Site's western boundary, and a further byway (ARBO8) leads from Mole Road close to the southern boundary towards Ellis's Hill and Barkham. As set out in this application, the proposals by Gleeson will (as part of the LVGV as a whole) deliver comprehensive new walking, cycling, road and public transport infrastructure to support a sustainable new residential-led community. This will include the joining up of these two byway routes with a new crossing of Mole Road.

## 3.4 Green and Blue Infrastructure

- 3.4.1 The Site comprises three modified grassland fields and a single arable field. These are subdivided by two native hedgerows with trees and a fence-line. All of the Site's external boundaries also feature native hedgerows. These are all maintained which allows views into the Site. Large mature oak and ash trees can also be found within the hedgerows. The hedgerows contribute towards the Site's ecological value and visual character.
- 3.4.2 Within the Site, there are 62 individual trees and 2 groups of trees. The Site is bordered by two areas of Ancient Woodland: Dog Kennel Copse to the north and Brick Kiln Coppice to the south west, both of which will be protected through the incorporation of 15 metres undeveloped buffers within the masterplan.
- 3.4.3 The surrounding lanes, including Church Lane and Mole Road, are framed by deep gardens, hedgerows, and watercourses, creating a cohesive green infrastructure network that visually and ecologically links the Site to the wider landscape.
- 3.4.4 The Environment Agency's online Flood Map for Planning confirms the Site is located in Flood Zone 1 (low risk of flooding). The Environment Agency mapping also shows some areas of the Site, along the central ditch to be subject to surface water flooding. Flood risk to the Site from all other sources is considered low.
- 3.4.5 While the Site itself does not contain significant natural water bodies, its proximity to the Barkham Brook, the River Loddon, Bearwood Lake, and other features integrates it within a wider blue infrastructure network. The existing ditches and associated hedgerows offer opportunities to create integrated blue-green corridors that support both drainage and biodiversity functions.

## 3.5 Ecology

- 3.5.1 The Site is within the setting of the Thames Basin Heaths (TBH) Special Protection Area (SPA), a Site of International importance. Two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are located within 5km of the Site, Longmoor Bog and Bramshill, which are of National importance. Twelve Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are within 2 kilometres of the Site. None of these designations fall within the Site boundary.
- 3.5.2 The Site consists of arable land which is of little ecological value, although may provide foraging opportunities for local biodiversity. The Site is largely bound by native hedgerows, of which many are heavily managed through flailing. At the north of the Site is an area of Lowland mixed deciduous woodland, a section of which is listed on the Provisional Ancient Woodland Inventory and is therefore classified as irreplaceable habitat and is of Local importance.
- 3.5.3 There are a substantial number of 'Trees of Ecological Interest' but no veteran trees.
- 3.5.4 Surveys undertaken in the preparation of this application found evidence that badgers are using the Site, which is consistent with the extensive records of badger activity in the area. No setts are present on the Site.
- 3.5.5 There is extensive evidence of bat activity on the Site, concentrated on the boundary hedges and trees. The Common Pipistrelle is the most common species but Long-Eared and Barbastelle were also recorded.
- 3.5.6 A total of 46 species of bird were recorded either on or immediately adjacent to the Site, some of which are listed on the Birds of Conservation Concern Register. The majority of birds were recorded within the hedgerows, treelines and woodland on the Site, which provide foraging, roosting and nesting opportunities. In particular, two Skylark territories were recorded on the arable fields within the Site, a red-listed species on the Concern Register.

3.5.7 The Site is not suitable for water vole or otter. The woodland to the north of the Site presents suitable habitats for invertebrates.

## 3.6 Landscape Character

3.6.1 As defined by the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment, 2019, the surrounding landscape to the north, west and south of the Site is typical of the wider 'Arborfield and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay' landscape character in which the Site is located. This is an undulating landscape with large arable fields and smaller pasture fields.

3.6.2 To the east, the landscape is typical of the southern part of the 'Bearwood Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills' character area, with coombe woodland valleys and grazed pasture and little settlement. There are glimpsed views from a short stretch of Mole Road, however mature hedgerows around Mole Bridge Farmhouse provides screening. Further to the east, there is an area of pasture farmland leading up Ellis's Hill towards an area of woodland called 'The Coombs'.

3.6.3 To the north of the Site there is a further hedgerow with mature oak trees on each side, together with a linear woodland, Dog Kennel Copse, which also includes Ancient Woodland and provides a degree of visual enclosure to views from the north.

3.6.4 The landscape to the north-east and south-east of the Site, including Dog Kennel Copse is within the draft 'Barkham and Bearwood' Valued Landscape, which does not preclude the proposed development. To the south of the Site, there are limited views into the Site from Mole Road but this boundary also benefits from native hedgerow with occasional mature trees providing a degree of screening.

## 3.7 Historic Context

### *Archaeology*

3.7.1 There are five areas of archaeological interest within the Site following previous finds including Roman coins, prehistoric flint artefacts (now removed) and Roman pottery and there is also evidence of ridge and furrow. The archaeological impacts of the Proposed Development are considered in full in Chapter 8 of the accompanying Environmental Statement.

### *Built Heritage*

3.7.2 There are no Listed Buildings within the Site, but there is a range of Listed Buildings and heritage assets (designated and non-designated) in the immediate surroundings, including:

*Table 3.1: Listed Buildings and non-designated heritage assets within the Site boundary*

Listed Building	Grade	Location
St Bartholomew's Church	II	110 metres to Southwest
Mole Bridge Farmhouse	II	135 metres to east
The Glen	II	460 metres to northeast
Carters Hill	II	625 metres to north
Old Rectory	II	625 metres to southwest
Bearwood Park	II*	500 metres to northeast
Reading Room	Non-designated asset	Immediately south
Monks Cottage	Non-designated asset	Immediately north

3.7.3 The impacts of this development on the significance of these assets are considered in full in Chapter 9 of the Environmental Statement accompanying this application.

## 3.8 Minerals

3.8.1 Part of the wider LVGV Site falls within a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA) for 'Sharp Sand and Gravel' as identified in the Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP) for Wokingham Borough Council, Bracknell Forest Council, Reading Borough Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. No part of this Site falls within the MSA.

## 3.9 Planning Application History

3.9.1 No planning applications have previously been submitted on the Site, but a number of substantial applications have been submitted in the surrounding context in recent years, which have some direct and indirect relevance.

*Table 3.1: Planning History*

No.	Site / location	Description	Outcome
252498	UoR Loddon Garden Village application	Hybrid planning application (part in full, part in outline) comprising outline application for up to 2,800 residential units [...] <sup>2</sup>	Registered October 2025
242484	Land to the north of Arborfield Road west of Shinfield Eastern Relief Road	Full application for the erection of 191 dwellings, open space, landscaping, supporting infrastructure and associated works.	Registered October 2024, currently under consideration
232833	Land South Of Cutbush Lane East	Full application for the proposed Construction of a Collections, Digitisation & Research Centre with associated infrastructure and external works including car parking, SUDS basin and landscaping.	Approved September 2024
232995	Land South Of Cutbush Lane East	Full planning permission for the construction of an extension to the Thames Valley Science Park to provide access to a proposed new building for the Natural History Museum, landscaping, surface water attenuation and other associated works.	Approved September 2024
243099	Land North of Reading Road Arborfield	Outline application for the proposed erection of up to 111 no. dwellings with associated works, parking, landscaping, publicly accessible open space and access from Reading Road. (All matters reserved except for means of access.)	Refused May 2024
222906	Land south of Oldhouse Farm	Full planning application for the proposed erection of a temporary Film Studio Backlot (for a period of 5 years)	Approved February 2024
181631	Land South of Reading Road and Arborfield Road, East of Chestnut Crescent, West of the River Loddon	Full planning application for the change of use of 21.7ha of land from agricultural use to informal recreation (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace SANG) and associated infrastructure including pedestrian and vehicle access, a car park, footpath network and landscaping.	Appeal allowed January 2020

<sup>2</sup> Formal description includes further detail of component parts, reflecting policy SS13.

No.	Site / location	Description	Outcome
182059	Land off Cutbush Lane	Hybrid planning application in respect to: 1) Full planning application for a 15,628sqm research and storage facility (Sui Generis Use for the British Museum); 80 parking spaces; landscaping and surface water drainage. 2) Outline planning application for up to 15,000sqm research and storage facility (Sui Generis Use for the British Museum) all matters reserved. 3) Demolition of two existing residential dwellings.	Approved February 2019
211841	Land North and South of Cutbush Lane Shinfield	Full planning permission for the Science Park Creative Media Hub comprising the erection of film stages and associated workshops and office space and ancillary uses including equipment stores, cafe. Formation of associated access, decked and surface parking, and landscaping at the Thames Valley Science Park (TVSP).	Approved December 2021

3.9.2 Overall, there are no forms of major residential development in the vicinity of the LVGV Site that would affect the implementation of the proposed scheme. The Environmental Statement submitted alongside this Planning Application provides a separate cumulative assessment of effects of the proposal at the LVGV on the wider locality.

## 4. The Proposed Development

### 4.1 Description of the Proposed Development

4.1.1 The formal description of development applied for is shown below.

*Outline Planning Application for the comprehensive development of land at Newlands Farm as part of Loddon Valley Garden Village, comprising:*

- *up to 430 dwellings;*
- *vehicular, bus, cycle and pedestrian corridor between Mole Road and northern boundary of site, to connect with the proposed Loddon Garden Village spine road;*
- *new pedestrian and cycle link between Byway ARB03 (Carter's Hill Lane) and Byway ARB08 (Ellis's Hill);*
- *comprehensive strategic landscaping and network of multi-functional green and blue infrastructure,*
- *biodiversity enhancements to achieve at least a net gain of 10%.*
- *associated utilities, infrastructure, and engineering works*

*All matters reserved other than details for the approval of the principal access from Mole Road.*

4.1.2 The application will deliver new homes to help address the Borough's housing requirements in the period to 2040, alongside providing new highways infrastructure, public open space, play spaces and landscaping. The proposals have been prepared to ensure a high quality development can be delivered, with a strong sense of place, community uses and a strong landscape-led approach that will integrate with the wider LVGV, both in terms of vehicular, footpath and cycle connections but also green and blue infrastructure. This approach ensures the development will fulfil the vision for the Site contained in Policy SS13 of the LPU.

4.1.3 The application is accompanied by the following Parameter Plans, which are submitted for approval:

*Table 4.1: Parameter Plans*

Plan	Drawing No:
Framework Plan	FWP.01 H
Route Hierarchy Plan	RHP.01 G
Storey Heights Plan	SHP.01 E

4.1.4 An Illustrative Masterplan is also submitted to demonstrate one way the development could come forward, consistent with these parameters.

4.1.5 These parameter plans identify elements of the scheme which are fixed at this point and will form the framework for the development within which the proposed development can be delivered and against which future Reserved Matters applications will be assessed.

### 4.2 Land Uses

4.2.1 The application Site includes the following land uses as shown on the accompanying Landscape and Land Use Plan:

- Residential Development
- Spine Road
- Public Open Space

- Blue/Green Infrastructure
- Woodland Buffer
- Play Space
- Communal Food Production

## 4.3 Layout

4.3.1 The layout has taken a landscape-led approach framed around green and blue infrastructure that links into the wider ecological network and SANG within the UoR development to the north. The development will comprise perimeter blocks which have been designed to be legible with integrated green streets and green squares. The indicative Spine Road weaves through the centre of the Site and will create a gateway into the wider LVGV to the north, providing access to a range of services and facilities.

4.3.2 The movement framework of the primary Spine Road and secondary and tertiary streets create a well-connected place, offering multi-modal routes, pedestrian and cyclist routes and linkages to wider existing networks. Segregated and integrated cycle and pedestrian pathways are provided throughout.

## 4.4 Approach to Density and Building Heights

4.4.1 Density of the Proposed Development will be sympathetic to the character of the area, and consistent with the strategic framework for the LVGV allocation.

4.4.2 Accordingly, as illustrated in the Design and Access Statement, higher density is envisaged around the Spine Road, with the potential for up to 4-storey development; and a lower density with primarily 2-storey development on the Site perimeters. This will create a softer, more organic development edge.

## 4.5 Green and Blue Infrastructure

4.5.1 The existing green and blue infrastructure networks running through the Site have been integrated into the development proposals through landscaped corridors which also include new habitat planting, SuDS, public open space and cycling, walking and recreational routes.

4.5.2 The open spaces across the Site have sought to maximise their multi-functional uses for a range of benefits including in relation to biodiversity, climate change, food growing, health, landscape, active transport, recreation and well-being. A wide range of open space types are proposed in line with the Open Space standards set out in the WBC LPU. The proposals also provide access to a range of facilities for children and young people, including 'play on the way', LEAPs and informal sports and activity provision. Two main play facilities are proposed, ensuring that all residents would be within a 400m walking distance from a play area.

4.5.3 The surface water drainage strategy for the Site works to mimic the current situation by collecting and attenuating run off before discharging it at greenfield rates to the existing ditch network and subsequently the Barkham Brook. The SuDS features proposed include conveyance swales, filter strips and attenuation basins based on a SuDS train. Infiltration is not considered a viable method due to the underlying clay soils. The attenuation basins will be designed to maximise their wildlife and biodiversity benefits.

## 4.6 Access and Movement

- 4.6.1 Vehicular access into the Site is proposed via a ghost island priority junction, to Mole Road. The access incorporates a new Greenway connection providing access for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. The central Spine Road through the Site will connect from Mole Road to the northern boundary and the Spine Road with the UoR parcel to the north. The Site will connect into the pedestrian, cycle and highway network of the wider LVGV and provide access to key facilities and services.
- 4.6.2 Emergency access is proposed to Church Lane incorporating a pedestrian and cycle access. Additional pedestrian and cycle accesses are also proposed on the western boundary.
- 4.6.3 The LVGV as a whole will also be supported by comprehensive new transport infrastructure, including public transport priority routes, a new link over the M4 to Lower Earley Way, new vehicular and pedestrian links over the River Loddon, a new link to Hatch Farm Way and the partial closure of Mill Lane and a new link to Mole Road (the latter of which will be delivered partially via this Application). Advantage will be taken of existing transport infrastructure and public transport networks, such as the well-established bus routes to Reading and Wokingham, Green Park, Winnersh and Reading Stations.
- 4.6.4 Gleeson are liaising closely with the other principal landowners within the LVGV and WBC, in terms of programming the build-out of the Site as a whole, factoring in their parallel (but separate) planning applications. Further detail on the phasing of the Site is provided in the Environmental Statement, which considers the cumulative effects of the three principal landowners' proposals.

# 5. Environmental Impact Assessment

## 5.1 EIA Screening

5.1.1 The Proposed Development falls within Schedule 2 Section 10(b) of the EIA Regulations as an “Urban development project” in which “the development includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development”, “the development includes more than 150 dwellings”, and “the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares”.

5.1.2 Owing to the nature and scale of the Proposed Development, the landowners within LVGV considered that it is likely to give rise to significant environmental effects and did not seek a *Screening* Opinion from the Council (i.e., to determine whether an EIA would be required), proceeding instead to request a *Scoping* Opinion (i.e., to determine how an EIA should be undertaken).

## 5.2 Scoping Request

5.2.1 A scoping request was submitted to the Council on 19 December 2024 (Council Ref: 24328) jointly by Gleeson, the UoR and HFLL. This was based on the following summary of development:

*“The delivery of around 3,930 dwellings together with associated infrastructure (to include internal roads / internal and external access points, landscaping, Site wide flood alleviation and surface water drainage and other required infrastructure). New link road over the M4 motorway to Lower Earley Way; new junctions and potential highway upgrades to existing routes. Phased expansion of the Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park (around 100,000m<sup>2</sup>). New neighbourhood and district centres (retail, leisure, sports, cultural, health and service facilities); and associated education facilities to include primary and secondary school provision. Provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, landscaping to include a country park.”*

5.2.2 As framed above, the Scoping Opinion relates to the entirety of the LPU SS13 allocation area, including the full quantum of 3,930 dwellings and TVSP expansion; i.e. a greater amount of development than directly included in this planning application by Gleeson. However, the Scoping process has nonetheless provided an appropriate framework for preparing this application.

5.2.3 The Scoping Report submitted to WBC<sup>3</sup> proposed the following scope of the Environmental Statement (ES):

*Table 5.1: Proposed Scope of Environmental Statement in Scoping Report submitted to WBC*

Topic	EIA Scoping Report Chapter	Scoped In / Out
Agricultural land and Soils	5	In
Air Quality and Odour	7	In
Archaeology	8	In
Built Heritage	9	In
Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases	10	In
Ecology	11	In

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix [5.1] to the Environmental Statement which accompanies this application

Topic	EIA Scoping Report Chapter	Scoped In / Out
Ground Conditions and Contamination	12	Out
Human Health	13	In
Landscape and Visual Impact	15	In
Noise and Vibration	16	In
Socio-Economics	17	In
Solid Waste Management	5	Out
Transport and Access	18	In
Water Resources (including Flood Risk and Drainage)	14	In

5.2.4 The Scoping report provided a detailed explanation of what each chapter within the ES would cover to ensure that each topic is comprehensive. This included the Legislative Context, Guidance and Previous Assessment work.

5.2.5 The Proposed Assessment Methodology included the proposed baseline data collection, the geographical scope, the temporal scope and proposed criteria for appraising the magnitude of impact for each topic. Each chapter also sought to establish a Baseline Environment from existing data sources.

5.2.6 Finally, each chapter sought to highlight the potential environmental impacts and effects of the proposed scheme, first during construction and then the operational/occupation phase.

## 5.3 Scoping Opinion

5.3.1 The Council issued its Scoping Opinion on 28 February 2025, based on the agreed summary of development. The Environmental Statement (ES) submitted in support of this application only assesses the extent of the land within Gleeson's control, whereas a separate ES has been undertaken for the UoR's application. However each ES considers the cumulative impact of the entire allocation along with other developments in the area.

5.3.2 The Council broadly agreed with the Scoping Request as to which topics should be scoped into the ES accompanying this application, as summarised above. The Council agreed to scope out Ground Conditions and Contamination on the basis that this can be covered by technical reports that would in any event be expected for an application of this scale. Similarly, Solid Waste Management was scoped out of the ES.

5.3.3 The Council's comments on each topic scoped into the ES are considered below. Again, these responses are relevant to the entire allocation which was scoped so not all feedback is relevant to this application.

- **Air Quality:** The chapter on air quality should be undertaken in accordance with the principles set out by the Institute of Air Quality Management.
- **Archaeology:** It is likely that more than one phase of archaeological works will be needed, and this can take place outside of the EIA process.

- **Agricultural Land Quality:** Further information to supplement the base maps will need to be provided in the ES.
- **Built Heritage:** The ES should also thoroughly assess potential impacts on the Site of St Bartholomews Church as it is a Scheduled Monument. This should include an assessment of impacts on significance, as contributed to by the monument's setting. The ES should demonstrate a field study area of sufficient size to capture all heritage assets likely to be affected. This should take into account associated activities such as contrition and traffic, which may alter how an asset is perceived.
- **Climate Change:** The impacts of the development should be considered in terms of how they contribute to the expenditure of the Borough-level carbon budget. The distribution of emissions and the intersections with climate adaptation requirements need to be examined in more detail. It should be demonstrated how climate mitigation measures have influenced the illustrative masterplan. It will be important to understand where responsibility for compliance will sit, and how progress towards benchmarks and targets will be measured.
- **Ecology:** Badger surveys should include Gravel Pit Wood and Carters Hill. The zone of influence should extend beyond the current survey boundary to understand the impact of the proposal on Badger clan interactions and permeability. The biodiversity net gain baseline will need to follow the Statutory User Guide for biodiversity net gain rules in relation to accounting for floodplain wetland mosaic, which is indicated in Natural England inventories as being present on Site and so will need to be factored into the baseline. More information is required to explain the bat surveys completed to date and the measures taken to remove survey bias.
- **Biodiversity:** The emerging Local Plan requires 20% BNG to be achieved on this Site and this includes a 20% increase in watercourse units. Proposals should include robust enhancements to rivers and there are opportunities to improve connectivity within the floodplain. The bottom section of the Barkham Brook should undergo a robust habitat assessment to identify the numerous opportunities for habitat improvement.
- **Water Resources:** The scope should be widened to include the Bearwood Reservoir. The drainage strategy for this proposed development should focus on sustainable, integrated solutions that address both flood risk and water quality. The drainage network should be designed to handle surface water and foul water runoff without exacerbating flood risks in surrounding areas. Careful consideration of flood alleviation, SuDS implementation, sewer capacity, and water quality control will be essential.
- **Landscape and Visual Impact:** The Valued Landscape Topic Paper (January 2020), has now been superseded by the Valued Landscapes Assessment (September 2024) and will need to be referred to in the ES. A number of viewpoints are indicated 5 within the Scoping Report, however it is not clear if all these will be included in the ES and prior agreement will be needed to additional viewpoints.
- **Noise and Vibration:** The ES should include a full noise assessment both for construction and post occupation of the proposed development. This should identify measures to mitigate existing and new residents from noise sources. Vibration should also be understood for construction and post occupation and identify sensitive receptors existing residents and new occupants. The ES should identify and mitigate the impacts of this and have regard to heritage assets.

- **Transport and Access:** Amendments are requested in terms of the geographical scope of the ES. National Highways has not seen any evidence to demonstrate that the proposed new link over the M4 is feasible or deliverable.

5.3.4 The feedback received in relation to each topic is addressed in the relevant chapter of the ES. Since receiving the comments, there has been ongoing liaison with WBC Highways officers concerning the scope for transport modelling and a Statement of Common Ground has been entered into with National Highways, which at paragraph 5.2e) states "*There is no object to the principle of a new bridge over the M4, subject to formal assessment and design*".

## 5.4 Summary of Environmental Statement

5.4.1 In light of the Scoping process, the Environmental Statement submitted with this application comprises the following chapters:

- Chapter 1 - Introduction;
- Chapter 2 - Site and Local Context;
- Chapter 3 - Proposed Development;
- Chapter 4 - consultation / alternatives;
- Chapter 5 - approach to assessment;
- Chapter 6 - Planning policy;
- Chapter 7 - Air Quality and odour;
- Chapter 8 - Archaeology;
- Chapter 9 - Built Heritage;
- Chapter 10 - Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases;
- Chapter 11 - Ecology;
- Chapter 12 - Human Health;
- Chapter 13 - Hydrology (Flood risk and drainage);
- Chapter 14 - Landscape and Visual Impact;
- Chapter 15 - Noise and Vibration;
- Chapter 16 - Socio-economics;
- Chapter 17 - Transport and access; and
- Chapter 18 - Summary of mitigation, residual and interactive effects.

5.4.2 Whilst this Planning Statement provides overall commentary on the application as a whole, particularly in relation to planning policy considerations, for full consideration of the environmental impacts of this proposal, reference should be made to the ES, along with the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) and supporting appendices and figures.

# 6. Pre-application engagement

## 6.1 Introduction and summary

6.1.1 The Site falls within the Loddon Valley Garden Village (LVGV), which is the largest single development proposal in the LPU and supports a quantum of housing and employment growth that is regionally significant. Gleeson alongside the other Landowners within the LVGV therefore recognises the importance of front-loaded engagement with an array of stakeholders. As noted in paragraphs 40-43 of the NPPF, pre-application engagement provides for better co-ordination and understanding and helps in identifying and resolving issues and concerns at an early stage.

6.1.2 Accordingly, there has been extensive pre-application engagement with Wokingham Borough Council, key stakeholders and local residents over several years. This extends back to November 2021; the point at which the Council published its Local Plan Update Revised Growth Strategy which proposed the Site for development. Engagement with WBC has included the following:

- 'Project Forum' meetings have been held on an approximately monthly basis since January 2022 with lead planning officers from WBC, to address the overall principles, form and delivery of LVGV. This has encompassed the proposed draft LPU policy and considerations for the Site-specific Strategic Design Code, as well as planning application matters;
- There have been periodic briefings to senior members and officers of WBC at key stages in the evolution and preparation of the Local Plan Update;
- Pre-application meetings have been held with WBC planning officers in relation to specific design and masterplanning material submitted to them by Gleeson; and
- Topic-specific workshops have been facilitated by WBC on a regular basis, to explore detailed environmental, technical and delivery matters with both planning officers and relevant specialist officers. These workshops have covered diverse topics including masterplanning, ecology, landscape, transport, education, sustainability, and infrastructure.

## 6.2 Core phase of public engagement, 2025

6.2.1 The most substantial element of public-facing engagement at the pre-application stage has been a phase of consultation undertaken in Spring 2025, comprising a variety of different methods and channels. Full details of this process are set out in the Statement of Community Engagement (SCE), prepared by Meeting Place, which accompanies this application.

6.2.2 In summary, the major elements of this process have been as follows:

- **11 March:** Formal launch of consultation, including publication of press release, and distribution of newsletter
- **17 March:** Webinar for Stakeholders;
- **27 March:** Shinfield public engagement event, Shinfield School Green Centre;
- **28 March:** Earley public engagement event, Meadow Suite, University of Reading, White Knights Campus;
- **29 March:** Arborfield public engagement event, Arborfield Village Hall;
- **3 April:** Arborfield and Barkham area stakeholder meeting, Arborfield Village Hall;
- **3 April:** Earley area stakeholder meeting, Radstock Lane Community Centre; and

- **23 April:** Winnersh area stakeholder meeting, Crowne Plaza, Winnersh Triangle.

6.2.3 Feedback was received in multiple ways, including:

- feedback form (paper and online);
- an interactive map;
- emails to [comments@meeting-place.uk](mailto:comments@meeting-place.uk)
- Freephone calls to 0800 148 8911;
- letters to Freepost, MEETING PLACE CONSULTATION; and
- through the stakeholder engagement meetings and public events.

6.2.4 Over the six-week consultation period, written feedback was received from over 400 people, via 376 feedback forms, 14 comments on interactive map, ten emails and two letters. Around 350 people attended the meetings and events, with:

- over 274 at the three public consultations;
- a total of 45 attending the four area stakeholder group meetings; and
- 34 attending the webinar for Stakeholders.

6.2.5 At the public engagement events there was praise for the quality of consultation, especially the range of specialist consultants present to answer questions at events.

6.2.6 The theme that generated the most feedback and concern from residents and stakeholders was transport, because of the impact on everyday lives. Existing traffic congestion across the local area was mentioned frequently, the common concern being whether this would worsen with further development, despite proposed road upgrades. Concern over ongoing disruption during construction was also a common concern.

6.2.7 Flooding, drainage and sewage concerns were raised many times, as well as healthcare provision. There was a strong desire for stewardship by the University of Reading being maintained. People were keen to see a mix of housing, with truly affordable housing and provision for key workers.

6.2.8 Part 2 of the SCE provides responses to the key issues raised during the consultation and engagement process, taking account of the detailed work undertaken through the preparation of this planning application. The key themes responded to including:

- Housing;
- Community facilities;
- Employment and education;
- Sustainability and environmental considerations;
- Transport; and
- Vision and values.

6.2.9 Gleeson and the other Landowners are grateful to all those who participated in the consultation process, particularly local residents giving up their time to provide their input, which has been very helpful in shaping the proposals ultimately applied for in this application.

### **6.3 Design Evolution and Design and Access Statement**

6.3.1 The first set of land use and masterplan proposals for the LVGV were set out by WBC in November 2021 as part of its Regulation 18 consultation on the Local Plan Update. These were subsequently updated and were included as Figure 8 in the Council's Proposed Submission (Regulation 19) Plan, consulted on during Autumn 2024.

6.3.2 From that starting point, Gleeson and their consultant team, collaborating with the UoR and HFLL, have developed and refined their application proposals for the Newlands Farm parcel based on technical studies and design development. This has culminated in the plans set out in the DAS, Illustrative Masterplan and supporting Parameter Plans that accompany this application.

6.3.3 The DAS has been prepared in accordance with national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), and in particular paragraphs 023-033<sup>4</sup>. The DAS also follows the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure, England) (Amendment Order 2013). It sets out and explains how the proposals have been designed through a methodical process.

6.3.4 As set out in the DAS, the Illustrative Masterplan and Parameter Plans are consistent with the indicative LPU Regulation 19 Concept Plan for the LVGV. The Illustrative Masterplan has, however, evolved into more detail, as would be expected at the planning application stage.

6.3.5 In December 2024, at an early stage of the planning application process, initial advice and recommendations were sought from the Design South East (DSE) Design Review Panel by Gleeson, the UoR and HFLL; a process which WBC was also closely involved with. With the Council the feedback provided has been considered and where possible changes have been made in response.

## 6.4 Pre-application Discussions

6.4.1 A Planning Performance Agreement has been in place with WBC since 2022, through which a series of site visits, workshops and pre-application meetings have been held with a range of planning and technical officers. These meetings have provided a range of feedback that has been discussed and where practicable responded to through the process of preparing the planning application.

6.4.2 The key themes and issues raised through the pre-application process can be summarised as follows, each of which has been addressed via the planning application:

- **Masterplan:** A landscape led approach to be adopted centred around existing green and blue infrastructure and extending to an integrated approach for the design of sustainable Drainage Systems;
- **Transport:** Connections to adjacent communities and the wider locality to be established via a movement framework linked to the wider LVGV, including links to central Reading, Earley, Wokingham and surrounding villages. Active travel and use of Public transport to be prioritised with related strategies for both developed;
- **Traffic Modelling:** Engagement with WBC Highways required in relation to scope of modelling and consideration of traffic routing within and outside of the LVGV;
- **Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP):** Engagement with WBC required to develop a Site specific IDP for the LVGV;
- **Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):** Engagement with WBC required to demonstrate that ecology buffers have been respected and to agree scope and extent of baseline habitats on which BNG calculations will be made.

6.4.3 The following table summarises key points raised in the WBC written pre-application response:

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-an-application#Design-and-Access-Statement>

Table 6.1: Summary of WBC Pre-Application Response

Matter	WBC Feedback	Applicant Team Response
Design, Character and Appearance	Marmot Principles / Design for a Healthy Life encouraged	Please refer to the DAS and Chapter 12 of the ES as to how these principles are positively incorporated into the proposals.
Design, Character and Appearance	The location of 3-storey buildings near the Mole Road frontage raises concerns	Building heights are limited to 2 storeys (9m) and a landscape buffer to Mole Road is provided.
Design, Character and Appearance	Preference for HV cables to be grounded and if they are not consideration must be given to the outlook of adjacent homes	Please refer to Page 74 of the DAS for an explanation of how the proposal has been designed around pylons.
Transport	Define function of public spaces appropriate to location and nature of the proposed development	Please refer to the DAS for an explanation of how public spaces have been designed as an integral to the layout.
Transport	The design of Streets and Spaces must reflect Borough Design SPD, guidance provided within Wokingham Living Streets Guidance (2019), Manual for Streets 1 and 2, Local Transport Note 1/20 - Design of Cycle Infrastructure and Inclusive Mobility (2021)  Key principles of LTN120 should be incorporated	Please refer to the DAS, Chapter 17 of the ES and relevant appendices such as the Transport Assessment for an explanation of how all relevant local standards have been applied to the proposals
Detailed Design	Street trees need to be integrated to reduce maintenance liabilities  Masterplanning, particularly for pedestrian / cycle corridors, to be guided by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Landscape led approach</li><li>- adoptable standards</li><li>- SUDs (designed to contribute to character of place);</li><li>- Parking</li></ul>	Please refer to DAS for a detailed explanation of how the masterplan has evolved to prioritise pedestrians and cyclist within the layout, which is linked by green and blue infrastructure  Please refer to Chapter 13 of the ES and appendices for an explanation of how SuDs have been incorporated into the Drainage Strategy  A variety of parking solutions are indicative proposed to meet WBC standards
Links in and around the Site	Additional connections should be explored to provide future connections to land to the east, specifically in the form of pedestrian footways  Advise increasing the number of cycle and/or foot way connections between the application Site and the UoR land to the north	Please refer to DAS and Parameters for an explanation of the proposed movement network that includes multiple connections to the wider LVGV Site and the PRoW network beyond the Site to the east

Matter	WBC Feedback	Applicant Team Response
	Masterplan suggests a path on the eastern boundary of the Site, which should be incorporate	
Sustainable Transport	Recreational routes should be shared use, comprising footway, cycleways, and on carriage provision where safe to do so	A variety of formal and informal recreational routes are provided as discussed in the DAS and shown the parameter plans and Illustrative Masterplan
Access	Council would prefer a ghost island to be introduced into the T-junction.	A ghost island junction is introduced as requested. Please refer to Chapter 17 and appendices of the ES for a justification of the proposed primary access
Access	Consideration should be given to key connections from the Site and Barkham via Ellis Hill.	A new Greenway will route via Ellis's Hill, linking onto the wider Greenway network, providing access to Arborfield Cross and Woosehill.
Public Transport	Bus stops should be located in areas of high density within the Site	All residential properties will have a bus stop in reasonable walking distance of a maximum 400 metres
Valued Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	<p>Site has a close connection with the River Loddon and Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscapes</p> <p>Landscape treatment on the edges of the Site will need to address adjacent sensitive landscape character. LVIA to inform design principles / assessment of impacts on the Valued Landscape</p> <p>Strategically embedded landscape mitigation to be assessed via LVIA</p>	The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment provided in Chapter 14 of the ES considers the Valued Landscapes and makes landscape recommendations for mitigation measures
Landscape led Framework	<p>Development must achieve effective and high-quality routes for people and wildlife, taking opportunities to connect Green Infrastructure.</p> <p>These routes must incorporate space for strategic tree planting and other Blue and Green Infrastructure elements to support ecological, landscape, SUDS, and climate modification requirements</p>	<p>These measures have informed the landscape approach, including identification of areas for strategic planting.</p> <p>Existing landscape features such as the existing ditch and hedgerow have been retained and corridors to them created.</p> <p>The design process has been collaborative between landscape, ecology, drainage and highways to give a co-ordinated landscape led response to the various needs and requirements for the development.</p> <p>This includes provision of street trees, green corridors and SuDS features to provide a variety of landscape treatments and planting that will contributing to biodiversity enhancement.</p>
SANG	WBC will not be able to provide SANG; an alternative solution will therefore need to be	Provision is made for SANG sufficient to address the needs of the LVGV Site

Matter	WBC Feedback	Applicant Team Response
	identified within the LVGV in order to pass Appropriate Assessment	allocation in Eco Valley and is to be provided as part of the UoR development
Green Infrastructure	Potential to provide orchard planting alongside allotments, but should not replace allotment provision entirely	Two orchards are provided on the Illustrative Masterplan
Green Infrastructure	Vital that green space typologies work seamlessly across LVGV Site boundaries	Landscape typologies align with those for the adjacent parts of the LVGV. Green space creates a 'break' between the Site and the UoR parcels, maintaining separation between these
Green Infrastructure	15m buffer required to Ancient Woodland	This is provided for in the Parameter Plans and Illustrative Masterplan
Flooding and Drainage	Site specific FRA required  Outline Surface Water Drainage Strategy required  Detailed advice provided in relation to SUDs design runoff	Please refer to Chapter 13 and appendices of the ES for a full Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy
Contamination	A Phase 1 Contamination and Preliminary Risk Assessment will be required	A Ground Investigation Report is provided

6.4.4 The response also included commentary on drainage, sustainability, heritage, minerals, ecology, environmental health and affordable and specialist housing which are covered in Section 9 and 10 of this Planning Statement, within the ES and relevant technical reports.

6.4.5 The Planning Performance Agreement with WBC extends to the determination period for the Planning Application and therefore engagement with WBC, consultees and stakeholders will continue after the planning application has been submitted to the Council.

## 7. Development Plan Policy and Material Considerations

### 7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 directs Local Planning Authorities to determine planning applications in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 38(3) of the Act provides that the Development Plan includes the “*development plan documents (taken as a whole) which have been adopted or approved in relation to that area*”.

7.1.2 Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, states:

*“In dealing with an application for planning permission or permission in principle the authority shall have regard to:*

- (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application,*
- (aza) a post-examination draft neighbourhood development plan, so far as material to the application,*
- (aa) any considerations relating to the use of the Welsh language, so far as material to the application;*
- (b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and*
- (c) any other material considerations.”*

7.1.3 The adopted statutory Development Plan for this Site comprises the following:

- Adopted Core Strategy, January 2010;
- Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan, February 2014;
- The South East Plan 2009 – Saved Policy NRM6 only; and
- Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals & Waste Plan 2019.

7.1.4 Relevant policies within these Development Plan Documents (DPDs) are reviewed in turn below.

### 7.2 Wokingham Borough Core Strategy DPD

7.2.1 The Wokingham Borough Core Strategy DPD (adopted January 2010) set out a vision for how the Borough would develop in the period to 2026. The approach of the Core Strategy included delivering housing in locations that meet the needs of the community and supporting new mixed use development locations based primarily on larger scale (Strategic Development Locations (SDLs)) consisting of accessible, high quality, well designed development.

7.2.2 The four SDLs allocated in the Core Strategy were as follows:

- Arborfield Garrison (3,500 dwellings);
- South of the M4 (2,500 dwellings);
- North Wokingham (1,500 dwellings); and
- South Wokingham (2,500 dwellings).

7.2.3 WBC's Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement 2024<sup>5</sup> confirms that the following number of dwellings have been delivered at the SDLs to date:

*Table 7.1: Monitoring of completions on previous 2010 Core Strategy SDLs*

Development Area	Dwellings Permitted	Dwellings Completed (at 31 March 2024)	Remaining
Arborfield Garrison	3,642	1,699	1,955
South of the M4	2,893	2,826	67
North Wokingham	2,048	1,984	64
South Wokingham	2,458	636	1,821

7.2.4 The following policies from the 2010 Core Strategy are considered to be of most relevance to the Proposed Development:

- CP1: Sustainable development;
- CP2: Inclusive communities;
- CP3: General Principles for development;
- CP4: Infrastructure requirements;
- CP5: Housing mix, density and affordability;
- CP6: Managing Travel Demand;
- CP7: Biodiversity;
- CP8: Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area;
- CP9: Scale and location of development proposals;
- CP10: Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network; and
- CP11: Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside).
- CP17: Housing delivery

7.2.5 Whilst technically the above policies are extant, all have been confirmed as 'out of date' pursuant to NPPF paragraph 11d; as has been established in successive planning Appeals<sup>6</sup>.

## 7.3 Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Document (MDD)

7.3.1 The Wokingham Borough MDD (adopted February 2014) took forward and developed the objectives laid down in the Core Strategy. This includes providing additional detailed policies to use when considering development proposals. The following policies from this document are considered to be of most relevance to the Proposed Development.

- CC01: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development;
- CC02: Development Limits;
- CC03: Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping;
- CC04: Sustainable Design and Construction;
- CC05: Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks;
- CC06: Noise;

<sup>5</sup>[https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2025-01/Five%20Year%20Housing%20Land%20Supply%20Statement%202024\\_0.pdf](https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2025-01/Five%20Year%20Housing%20Land%20Supply%20Statement%202024_0.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Including appeal decision APP/X0360/W/24/3354667 (Berkeley Strategic, Blagrove Lane, May 2025)

- CC07: Parking;
- CC09: Development and Flood Risk (from all sources);
- CC10: Sustainable Drainage;
- TB05: Housing Mix;
- TB07: Internal Space Standards;
- TB08: Open Space, sport and recreational facilities standards for residential development;
- TB12: Employment Skills Plan;
- TB21: Landscape Character;
- TB23: Biodiversity and Development;
- TB24: Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas); and
- TB25: Archaeology.

7.3.2 Again, as with the Core Strategy, whilst technically extant, the above policies have been confirmed to be 'out-of-date' on Appeal, pursuant to the NPPF.

## 7.4 South East Plan

7.4.1 In May 2010 the Government announced its intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies, including the South East Plan. In February 2013 the South East Plan was formally abolished except for Policy NRM6 which relates to new residential development close to the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area. This policy remains in place as part of the Development Plan and has therefore been proactively addressed in this application.

## 7.5 Minerals and Waste Plan

7.5.1 A Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP) for Wokingham Borough Council, Bracknell Forest Council, Reading Borough Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead has been produced. The Plan was adopted by Wokingham Borough Council on 19 January 2023. Whilst part of the wider LVGV Site falls within a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA) for 'Sharp Sand and Gravel' under the JMWP, no part of this Site falls within the MSA.

## 7.6 Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan

7.6.1 The Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2036 was made in April 2020. Figure 7.1 below shows the extent of the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan Area which includes the application Site.

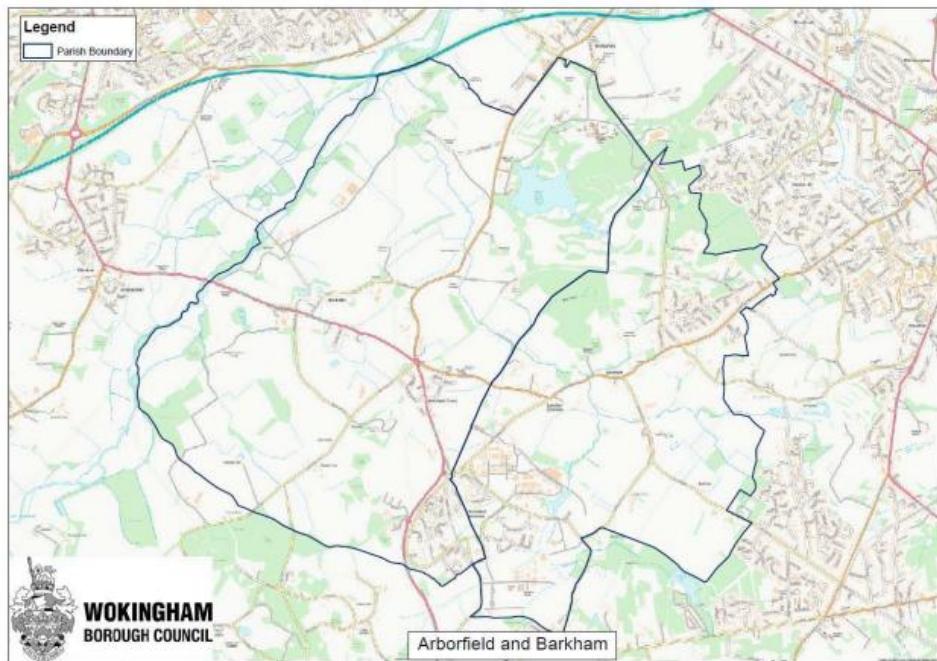


Figure 7.1: Map of Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan Area. Source: Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan.

7.6.2 NPPF paragraph 31 confirms that whilst policies in a Neighbourhood Plan take precedence over *existing non-strategic* policies in a Local Plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict. However, they would be superseded by *strategic* policies emerging *subsequently*.

7.6.3 We do not consider the policies in the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan to be of direct relevance to this planning application. By definition, it addresses non-strategic matters whereas the Local Plan Update addresses strategic matters; particularly the quantum and distribution of housing across Wokingham Borough as a whole, which itself responds to national planning objectives.

7.6.4 That said, the application proposals have had regard to a number of policies in the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan, including:

- **Policies IRS1 & 2:** retaining the separateness and setting of settlements;
- **Policy IRS3:** protecting and enhancing the natural environment;
- **Policies IRS4 & 5:** protecting and enhancing the historic environment;
- **Policy TC2:** planning for new community facilities;
- **Policy AD2:** providing a balanced mix of housing;
- **Policy AD3:** building to high design standards;
- **Policy AD4:** addressing flood risk;
- **Policies GA1, 2 & 3:** addressing transport matters through a suitable approach to traffic and roads, developing the local network of green routes for non-motorised users, and through public transport improvements.

## 7.7 Other material considerations

7.7.1 There are a number of documents that are material considerations in the context of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that may be referred to by the decision-taker for this planning application.

7.7.2 Material considerations include emerging Development Plan policy (notably the Local Plan Update), national policy, which is primarily expressed through the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance, as well as additional guidance produced by the Council and other relevant authorities in the form of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

## 7.8 Emerging Local Plan Update ('LPU')

7.8.1 For around 9 years, Wokingham Borough Council has been working to replace the extant Development Plan with what it refers to as the *Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update* ('LPU'). This process has undergone the following key steps:

- **August - September 2016:** Issues and Options consultation (Reg 18);
- **November 2018 - February 2019:** 'Homes for the Future' consultation (Reg 18);
- **February - April 2020:** Draft Plan 2020 consultation (Reg 18);
- **November 2021 - January 2022:** Revised Growth Strategy consultation (Reg 18);
- **September - November 2024:** Proposed Submission Plan consultation (Reg 19)

7.8.2 A key factor to note is that in the 'Homes for the Future' consultation in 2018/2019, and subsequently in the 2020 consultation, it was proposed to allocate a new Garden Village at Grazeley, located on the western edge of Wokingham Borough and partially in West Berkshire. This would have comprised a minimum of 15,000 new homes. However, a significant change in circumstances occurred in March 2020 when the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) for the Atomic Weapons Establishment, Burghfield was significantly extended, and as a result covered the proposed Grazeley allocation in its entirety.

7.8.3 Hence the Revised Growth Strategy Consultation in 2021-2022 introduced the Hall Farm / Loddon Valley Strategic Development Location via Policy SS3, as an alternative to Grazeley. This was originally proposed to comprise a minimum of 4,500 new homes (of which 2,200 to be completed by the end of 2037/38) and the phased expansion of the TVSP comprising 85,000sqm for film and television use and a further 100,000sqm for research and development. Gleeson has engaged positively to the LPU Regulation 18 and 19 consultations.

7.8.4 The LPU was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 28 February 2025. In March 2025, two Inspectors, T Hatfield BA(Hons) MPLAN MRTPI and M Philpott BA(Hons) MA MRTPI, were appointed to undertake an independent examination into the soundness and legal compliance of the Wokingham Local Plan Update.

7.8.5 The Inspectors submitted initial Questions to the Council on 17 April 2025 (ID1) which covered some of the following matters in relation to Loddon Valley Garden Village:

- Phasing assumptions applied;
- Consistency of costs for infrastructural requirements;
- The inclusion of infrastructural costs in the Viability Study;
- Contributions to Borough wide infrastructure;
- Basis for costings in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
- Contribution of each scheme within Loddon Valley Garden Village to infrastructure identified within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan; and
- Type of application to be submitted in 2025.

7.8.6 There were additional questions on the South Wokingham SDL and Arborfield Green SDL as well as questions on the following:

- Ability to demonstrate a 5 year supply from the date the Plan is adopted;

- Windfall allowances;
- Base date for Housing Trajectory;
- Duty to Cooperate;
- Plan Period;
- Review of new flood zone data;
- Improvements to Arborfield Sewage Treatment Works;
- Sewer flooding; and
- Transport modelling.

7.8.7 The Council submitted a response to the initial questions on 28 May 2025 (ID1) which dealt positively and proactively to the matters arising, with substantial input having been provided by the UoR and other landowners over the timing and delivery of LVG as a whole.

7.8.8 On 5 October 2025, a Regulation 24 Notice of Hearing Sessions was published which confirmed a programme of hearing sessions in November 2025.

7.8.9 Paragraph 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) states that Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to three factors:

- 'a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);*
- 'b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and*
- 'c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).*

7.8.10 As regards (a), the LPU is at Examination, which represents an advanced stage of preparation,. Regarding (b), whilst there are objections to the LPU, these can be resolved through the Examination process and therefore do not consider that the weight of the LPU is appreciably reduced. Regarding (c) the policies in the LPU are broadly consistent with the NPPF in all material respects and hence their weight is not diminished.

7.8.11 Given the above, we believe that **substantial weight** can be given to the LPU as a material consideration and that this is expected to increase further through the course of the determination of this planning application and as the Examination progresses, with the LPU ultimately becoming part of the statutory Development Plan.

7.8.12 The following policies from the LPU are considered to be of most relevance to the determination of this application.

- **Delivering the Spatial Strategy:**
  - SS1: Sustainable development principles
  - SS2: Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy
  - SS10: Meeting our housing needs
  - SS13: Loddon Valley Garden Village
  - SS14: Sites allocated for residential, including residential as part of mixed-use development
  - SS17: Transport improvements
- **Climate Change and Energy:**
  - CE1: Design principles for efficient buildings
  - CE3: Environmental standards for residential development

- CE4: Supporting a circular economy
- CE5: Embodied carbon
- CE7: Low carbon and renewable energy generation
- **Connections:**
  - C1: Active and sustainable transport and accessibility
  - C2: Mitigation of transport impacts and highways safety and design
  - C3: Active travel
  - C4: Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way
  - C5: Parking and electric vehicle charging
  - C6: Technology and innovation in transport
  - C7: Digital infrastructure and communications technology
  - C8: Utilities
- **Economy, Employment and Retail:**
  - ER4: Employment and skills plans
- **Housing:**
  - H1: Housing mix, density and standards
  - H3: Affordable housing
- **Flooding and Drainage:**
  - FD1: Development and flood risk (from all sources)
  - FD2: Sustainable drainage
- **Natural Environment:**
  - NE1: Biodiversity and geodiversity
  - NE2: Biodiversity net gain
  - NE3: Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
  - NE4: Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows
  - NE5: Landscape and design
  - NE6: Valued landscapes
- **Design, Heritage and the Built Environment:**
  - DH1: Place making and quality design
  - DH2: Safeguarding amenity
  - DH5: The historic environment
  - DH6: Archaeology
- **Healthy and Safe Communities:**
  - HC1: Promoting healthy communities
  - HC2: Community infrastructure
- **HC4: Open space, sports, recreation and play facilities:**
  - HC5: Environmental protection
  - HC6: Air pollution and air quality
  - HC7: Light pollution
  - HC8: Noise pollution
  - HC9: Contaminated land and water
  - HC10: Odour, fumes, and dust

7.8.13 Of particular relevance is Policy SS13, which identifies the application Site as being within a Strategic Development Location. The Loddon Valley Garden Village SDL is proposed to be allocated for a '*beautifully and imaginatively designed community including housing, employment, social and physical infrastructure.*' The policy sets out development, place shaping, and delivery principles which are discussed in Sections 8, 9 and 13 below.

## 7.9 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

7.9.1 An update to the NPPF was published in December 2024 with a further minor amendment being made in February 2025. The policy requirements of the NPPF are material to the consideration of applications for planning permission. The chapters and paragraphs of most relevance to this application are outlined below.

7.9.2 Paragraph 2 in the introduction states:

*"Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements."*

7.9.3 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out the overarching objectives of the planning system in achieving sustainable development:

*"a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*

*b) a social objective – 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; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*

*c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."*

7.9.4 Paragraph 10 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of the NPPF, which at paragraph 11, is defined for decision making as:

*"c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*

*d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

*i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*

*ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.”*

- 7.9.5 Footnote 8 sets out that the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date for applications involving the provision of housing, where: the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing Sites (with the appropriate buffer as set out in paragraph 78); or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75% of) the housing requirement over the previous three years.
- 7.9.6 In relation to paragraph 11(d)(i), footnote 7 confirms that the policies referred to are those in the NPPF relating to: habitats Sites (and those Sites listed in paragraph 194) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.
- 7.9.7 Paragraph 61 underlines the importance of land coming forward where needed to support to Government's overarching objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes.
- 7.9.8 Paragraph 66 states that for major developments, planning policies and decisions should expect that the mix of affordable housing required meets identified local needs, across Social Rent, other affordable housing for rent and affordable home ownership tenures.
- 7.9.9 Paragraph 77 sets out that the supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities (including a genuine choice of transport modes).
- 7.9.10 Other relevant paragraphs of the NPPF are discussed as part of Section 9 (Technical Assessment) below.

## 7.10 Planning Practice Guidance

- 7.10.1 On 6 March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government issued its Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) web-based resource, which is updated regularly. The PPG provides detailed guidance on the implementation of the NPPF and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Parts have been updated to reflect the new NPPF, and the application responds to the new advice and guidance.

## 7.11 National Design Guide and National Model Design Code

- 7.11.1 The National Design Guide (NDG), published October 2019 by the (then) Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, is planning practice guidance for 'beautiful, enduring and successful' places.
- 7.11.2 The NDG addresses the question of how we recognise well designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics.
- 7.11.3 The focus of the NDG is on good design in the planning system, so it is for local authority planning officers, councillors, planning applicants and their design teams as well as people in local communities and their representatives.

- 7.11.4 The National Model Design Code (NMDC) provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design.
- 7.11.5 The Design and Access Statement which forms part of the planning application documentation confirms that the ten characteristics from the NDG have been used to check that all aspects of the proposals have been considered, and that the proposals represent the best design possible in this location.

## 7.12 Evidence base supporting the Local Plan Update

- 7.12.1 The Wokingham Borough Council Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) specifically considers the suitability, availability and achievability of land for development.
- 7.12.2 To assist the process the Council commissioned masterplanning studies to inform the opportunities, constraints and infrastructure ask and high-level viability of areas identified as having potential for strategic development including Hall Farm / Loddon Valley. The wider LVGV Site, including the Application Site, was identified as a potentially developable Site with a capacity of 3,930 dwellings.
- 7.12.3 The Topic Paper: Housing: Site Allocations (September 2024) provides background to explain the Site Allocations within the LPU: Proposed Submission Plan (September 2024). In relation to the LVGV it states the reasons for Site selection as follows:

*“Loddon Valley Garden Village has been identified as strategic opportunity to deliver a new community which aligns to garden city principles.*

*The Site provides an opportunity to provide key infrastructure including a district centre and local centres, primary schools and a secondary school, and a new country park. The location is in proximity to major employment hubs and located on key transport corridors, providing an opportunity for enhanced public transport and active travel. In designing the country park, there is an opportunity to deliver flood risk attenuation to currently affected areas downstream of the Site.*

*Whilst constraints do exist across the site, work undertaken to date indicates that these can be addressed and appropriately mitigated.*

*The opportunity is in line with the spatial strategy.*

*The opportunity has been explored through the sustainability appraisal.*

*The Sites treated as a variable but is noted to perform better than other strategic Site options.”*

- 7.12.4 These considerations have been factored into this application, working closely with the recent application by the UoR on adjoining land.

## 7.13 Five Year Housing Land Supply

- 7.13.1 The NPPF requires local authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable Sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than 5 years old.

7.13.2 WBC published a Five-Year Housing Land Supply Statement which sets out the housing completions at 31 March 2024 and the supply of deliverable Sites for the subsequent five year period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2029.

7.13.3 The Statement confirmed that at 31 March 2024, WBC could demonstrate only a 1.7 year housing land supply against the local housing need of 1,336 with the total number of dwellings deemed deliverable in the 5-year period being 2,321. A recent appeal decision for Land adjacent to Blagrove Lane, Wokingham (ref APP/X0360/W/24/3354667), dated 29 May 2025, confirmed 1.7 years is the latest agreed position on housing land supply.

7.13.4 As such, as outlined elsewhere in this document, extant Local Plan policies can be considered 'out of date' and the 'presumption in favour' applies, consistent with paragraph 11d of the NPPF.

## 7.14 Supplementary Planning Documents

### *Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD*

7.14.1 The Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD was adopted in October 2011 following the adoption of the Core Strategy, with the aim of delivering a viable infrastructure solutions to support the new developments. The SPD sets out the infrastructure requirements and obligations for the four SDLs allocated in the Core Strategy. It is anticipated that a similar SPD will be adopted for the allocations in the emerging Local Plan.

### *Sustainable Design and Construction SPD and Companion Document*

7.14.2 The Sustainable Design and Construction SPD was adopted in May 2010 and promotes the use of sustainable techniques (including renewable energy technologies) and materials in the construction of buildings and structures. The SPD provides guidance to help improve the sustainability performance of buildings and spaces through their design and subsequent use. In particular, it forms part of the suite of documents guiding the four SDLs in the Core Strategy.

### *Borough Design Guide*

7.14.3 The Borough Design Guide SPD was adopted in June 2012 to encourage developers to bring forward well designed developments which complement and build upon the character of that immediate area. The key objectives of the design guide are:

- *"To promote good design through the development process;*
- *To create attractive, harmonious and well used places;*
- *To ensure that all developments improve the character and quality of the area;*
- *To encourage vibrant communities where people feel safe;*
- *To create places that provide ease of movement and are accessible to all;*
- *To respect and be sympathetic to the character of the area in which the development is situated;*
- *To minimise overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of amenity or over-dominance;*
- *To take full account of the mass and height of development in relation to adjacent development and surrounding spaces; and*
- *To ensure that new development meets the needs of its users."*

### *Play Space Design Guide Technical Note*

7.14.4 The Play Space Design Guide (December 2019) sets out the Council's ethos, principles and benchmarks for play facilities. The document is supplementary to the requirements of the WBC

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy and the Borough Design Guide. It aims to ensure adequate play facilities for all age groups are delivered via the planning process.

*Affordable Housing SPD*

7.14.5 The Affordable Housing SPD was adopted in July 2013 and supports the Core Strategy Policies CP5, CP15 and CP16. It provides further guidance of the Council's approach to securing affordable housing through the planning process.

## 7.15 Other Supplementary Guidance Documents

*Climate Change Interim Policy Position Statement*

7.15.1 The Interim Planning Policy Position Statement was published as an explanatory document in December 2022 and sets out WBC's position on the issue of climate change when assessing planning applications. The statement makes clear that WBC will expect, as a minimum, that development proposals contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation by applying adopted policies to their best effect. It is also an expectation that development proposals play their part and go beyond current requirements to be more aligned with emerging local and national policy. Where development proposals demonstrably go above and beyond adopted policy requirements, this will be weighed positively in the balance when assessing a development proposal.

*First Homes Interim Policy Statement*

7.15.2 The First Homes Interim Policy Statement was published in January 2022 following the Written Ministerial Statement on First homes on 24 May 2021. The statement sets out that, as referenced in the PPG, a minimum of 25% of all affordable housing units secured through developer contributions should be First Homes. Once a minimum of 25% of First Homes has been accounted for, social rent and the remaining affordable housing tenures should be delivered in the same percentage / proportions as set out in Core Strategy Policy CP5.

7.15.3 It is noted that, to provide more flexibility, the NPPF (December 2024) removed the reference to a 25% requirement for first homes.

*Parking standards calculator*

7.15.4 This is a tool based on the parking demand technical report to identify an appropriate parking allocation for developments based on accessibility and the character of the area, whether spaces are allocated to a specific dwelling or unallocated and the number of bedrooms and habitable rooms of each dwelling.

*Highways development design guidance*

7.15.5 Living Streets: A Highways Guide for Developers in Wokingham was published in 2019 and outlines the key principles to follow when producing new highway layouts for all types of development. The document sets out that layouts should be compliant with the philosophy of Manual for Streets (DfT, 2007c) and Manual for Streets 2 (CIHT, 2010).

*Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy*

7.15.6 The Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy was adopted in November 2013. It provides guidance on the approach it envisages to the application of the open space, sport and recreational facilities standards for residential development in Policy TB08 of the Managing Development Delivery Development Plan Document. Although this policy remains technically in

force, so far as LVGV is concerned, broadly speaking, the principles and themes of this strategy have been superseded by and incorporated into policy SS13 of the LPU.

## 7.16 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

7.16.1 WBC approved its CIL Charging Schedule on 19 February 2015, and it came into effect on 6 April 2015. The Charging Schedule sets out specific CIL rates for the previously-allocated SDLs and for the 'rest of the Borough' (the CIL rate for the 'rest of the Borough' is £365 per square metre); which will encompass Loddon Garden Village until such time as the LPU progresses and the Charging Schedule is amended.

7.16.2 It is anticipated that the Charging Schedule will be updated alongside the LPU to cover the new Site allocations including SS13 Loddon Garden Village. Contributions from the LVGV are thus expected to be dealt with by planning obligations, in accordance with the separate site-wide Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), rather than through CIL.

# 8. Principle of Development

## 8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 This section of the Planning Statement addresses why the principle of development at Newlands Farm is acceptable in the context of the adopted and emerging Local Plan and WBC's lack of five-year housing land supply. The Site is not allocated in extant Local Plan policies and is therefore, until the LPU is formally adopted, considered open countryside.

8.1.2 However, WBC are not able to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply and therefore relevant policies in the Local Plan are 'out of date'. This has been confirmed at recent appeals including APP/X0360/W/24/3354144 (April 2025) and APP/X0360/W/24/3354667 (May 2025) which refer to a supply of 1.7 years.

8.1.3 This means that paragraph 11d of the Framework is engaged, i.e. planning permission should be granted unless:

- i. *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.*

8.1.4 Neither of the above exceptions apply in this instance. With regard to Part i., the Site is not within any of the protected areas referred to by footnote 7. Concerning Part ii., the documents accompanying this application demonstrate that the Site is well related to existing public transport and active travel networks and a range of existing services and facilities. As set out in Chapter 12 below, this planning statement demonstrates and concludes that the benefits of the proposed development significantly and demonstrably outweigh the harms, taking into account the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainability.

8.1.5 Over and above paragraph 11d, this application receives significant support under NPPF Paragraph 49 on account of its emerging allocation status. This policy status should be attributed substantial weight, and this section demonstrates that the application conforms with all relevant aspects of the Local Plan Update and Policy SS13. Under paragraph 49 of the Framework, local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- a) *the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);*
- b) *the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and*
- c) *the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).*

8.1.6 In relation to (a), the LPU is at Examination with Inspectors appointed and the Inspectors initial questions having been responded to by WBC and therefore the plan is at an advanced stage. At the time of writing formal Part 1 Examination hearing sessions are will commence on 18 November.

8.1.7 In relation to (b), whilst there are objections to the Plan including Policy SS13, there are no unresolved objections from statutory consultees that are fundamental to the Site being included in the plan. As mentioned above, it is the case that the Inspectors have raised Initial Questions (ID1) in relation to the Local Plan and Policy SS13. However, these primarily focus on the Inspectors' need to examine in detail the overarching delivery of the Site, including the timing, funding and mechanisms for the delivery of key infrastructure. Given the significance of LVGV within the Local Plan, these are matters that should naturally be explored by Inspectors and do not raise 'in principle' concerns over the allocation.

8.1.8 In relation to (c), there is a high degree of consistency between the LPU and the Framework in terms of the aspirations for LVGV expressed in Policy SS13. Whilst the housing need figure in the LPU is below the Standard Method Figure, the Plan adheres to the transitional arrangements set out within the Framework.

8.1.9 Upon adoption of the LPU, WBC will be able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. At this point, the LVGV and Newlands Farm will accord with an up-to-date development plan and thus should be approved without delay in line with paragraph 11c of the Framework.

## 8.2 Policy SS13: Loddon Valley Garden Village

8.2.1 Policy SS13 allocates the Application Site, thus confirming WBC's clear intention to bring the Site forward. On adoption, the LPU through SS13 will formally establish the principle of development as a part of the statutory Development Plan.

8.2.2 An assessment of the Site against the development, place shaping and delivery principles provided by Policy SS13 is set out in Table 8.1 below. A number of the policy requirements are to be addressed via collaboration between the principal Landowners, linked to S106 Agreements that will be entered into by Gleeson, the UoR and HFLL.

**Table 8.2: Assessment of proposed development against Policy SS13 principles**

Policy SS13 Principle		Assessment of application against principle
Development Principles		
a)	<p>Around 3,930 dwellings, of which at least 2,700 dwellings will be delivered by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2040, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. 40% affordable homes, in accordance with Policy H3;</li> <li>ii. 100 custom and self-build serviced plots;</li> <li>iii. 20 Gypsy and Traveller pitches; and</li> <li>iv. Specialist accommodation, including accommodation for older persons.</li> </ul>	<p>Regarding the quantum of homes, this planning application will contribute towards the overall target of 3,930 for the whole allocation, by delivering up to 430 dwellings. The balance will be provided via applications made by the other landowners within the SDL boundary.</p> <p>This application will provide for 40% affordable homes in accordance with and subject to the detailed criteria of policy H3.</p> <p>Application made by the UoR within the SDL boundary will address the requirement for custom and self-build serviced plots, Gypsy and Traveller pitches and specialist accommodation.</p>
b)	Around 100,000 m <sup>2</sup> of research and development floorspace or equivalent	This requirement will be addressed by the UoR, who are the owners of the Thames Valley Science Park (TVSP).

<b>Policy SS13 Principle</b>		<b>Assessment of application against principle</b>
	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	This application will however directly complement the TVSP and the economic objectives of the SS13 and the plan as a whole, by providing much-needed housing of a variety of types and sizes in a location that is accessible to the TVSP and other current and emerging clusters of employment in the local area.
c)	<p>Schools, including:</p> <p>i. Two 3-form entry primary schools (including appropriate on-Site early years provision); and</p> <p>ii. An 8-form entry secondary school, with additional land reserved to enable expansion to 12-form entry with sixth form.</p> <p>Each school should include space for the integrated teaching of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.</p>	The requirement for schools is addressed by the UoR in their application for the part of the LVGV under their control.
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.	The requirement for a District and a Local Centre is addressed by the UoR in their application for the part of the LVGV under their control. HFLL will address the requirement for a further local centre via their planning application.
e)	Two Local Centres providing day to day retail and other local community uses.	This application includes connections to ensure the Site provides good accessibility to the wider SDL, including the District and Local Centres.
f)	A multi-functional country park which is accessible to settlements beyond the garden village; and	The UoR application makes provision for EcoValley, an area of public open space and SANG between the LVGV and the TVSP. This planning application will provide connections to ensure EcoValley will be accessible to new residents of the development as well as surrounding communities. This will be achieved through the development of a network of footpath and cycleways to integrate with existing Rights of Way.
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).	This requirement has been addressed through the UoR's application which provides two areas of on-Site SANG (with a total Site area of 58.75ha) within EcoValley. The SANG will be sufficient for the full SDL allocation and accords with the requirements and guidance of Natural England in both quantitative and qualitative terms.

<b>Policy SS13 Principle</b>		<b>Assessment of application against principle</b>
		The approach to the location and design of the SANG areas has been the subject of discussions with Natural England and WBC.
<b>Place Shaping Principles</b>		
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;	As explained in the Design and Access Statement, and demonstrated in the submitted application drawings, this application has been configured in direct accordance with this objective with the preservation and enhancement of green and blue infrastructure on the Site having been integral to masterplanning process.
b)	Protect and retain the permanent physical and visual sense of separation of Arborfield and the defined settlements of Arborfield Cross and Shinfield;	The Site falls within the Modest Settlement Boundary for the LVGV as defined by LPU Policies Map C1. Consistent with the LPU Concept Plan by David Lock Associates (LPU Figure 8), this ensures separation from these surrounding settlements through both physical separation, the reinforcement of green infrastructure, and careful consideration of use types as well as building densities and heights.
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;	Gleeson, the UoR and HFLL are working collaboratively to ensure that a network of active travel routes will serve all parts of the LVGV.  The services and facilities to serve the LVGV are primarily to be addressed via the UoR planning application, consistent with the LPU Concept Plan (Figure 8).  This application integrates with the wider network of walking and cycling routes to ensure that all of the services and facilities are accessible on foot or by cycle.
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;	This objective has been directly incorporated within the development in accordance with Active Travel and Public Transport strategies that have been developed in collaboration between Gleeson, the UoR and HFLL for LVGV, and which have been incorporated into the parameter plans and Illustrative Masterplan for this application.
e)	Incorporate measures to protect the separate identity of Carter's Hill;	This requirement is addressed by the UoR planning application, under which new built development does not occur directly adjacent to Carter's Hill, but rather there is a substantial landscape buffer around it, with Carter's Hill entirely omitted from the red line of the application.
f)	Incorporate measures to conservation and enhancement of heritage assets, including Listed Buildings, through	The Church of St Bartholomew's is located to the west of the Site. Mole Bridge Farmhouse is located to the east and

<b>Policy SS13 Principle</b>		<b>Assessment of application against principle</b>
	appropriate design and the provision of sufficient space;	<p>further east of the Site is the Bearwood College Historic Park and Garden.</p> <p>This has been addressed in relation to all of these heritage assets through the sensitive arrangement of new development, particularly through the inclusion of substantial green space and landscaping around St Bartholomew's Church. A detailed analysis of this is set out in Chapter 9 of the Environmental Statement which assesses heritage impacts.</p>
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 2,500m <sup>2</sup> ), leisure, cultural, community, health and service facilities;	As noted above, the wider LVGV will provide District and Local Centres. A comprehensive network of walking and cycling routes is planned to provide direct and convenient routes from the Site to the District and Local Centre within the UoR, which fall within 800m of the Site.
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;	This has been addressed directly through the proposed approach to density, as illustrated by the DAS, in which the highest densities are located along the central Spine Road. Around the Site edges, lower densities and building heights are proposed to create a softer edge, sympathetic to the countryside setting, particularly adjacent to Mole Road.
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	The Application Site is in Flood Zone 1, the area with the lowest risk of flooding from rivers. Some areas of the Site, along the central ditch, are at a higher risk of surface water flooding according to Environment Agency mapping. This area has been integrated into a blue-green corridor, and all new development is wholly located outside of all areas of flood risk.
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.	The Site is not located next to the River Loddon or Barkham Brook, and this application will deliver Biodiversity Net Gain in its own right. However, green corridors will be provided to ensure strategic connectivity with EcoValley, an area of public open space and SANG that follows the River Loddon, and across which the Barkham Brook will cross. EcoValley will create recreational opportunities, deliver additional Biodiversity Net Gain and be crossed by active travel routes that will connect the wider LVGV with TVSP.
<b>Delivery Principles</b>		
4.	The delivery of the garden village must be supported by a comprehensive package of infrastructure to support a	All key elements of infrastructure needed to support LVGV have been costed within the WBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan and will be delivered through collaboration between Gleeson, the UoR and HFLL.

Policy SS13 Principle		Assessment of application against principle
self-sustaining, thriving and healthy community including the following.		
<b>Masterplanning</b>		
5.	<p>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.</p>	<p>The parameter plans and Illustrative Masterplan included in this application conform directly to the David Lock Associates Concept Plan (LPU Figure 8) included and consulted on within the LPU, initially in 2021-2022 and subsequently in 2024.</p> <p>Gleeson has worked closely with the WBC, stakeholders and community in relation to these outline proposals through the pre-application process and have continued to do so through the Strategic Design Code (SDC) process led by WBC. This has included through the joint commissioning/tendering of an independent design practice to produce the SDC for LVGV.</p> <p>The SDC will be subject to preparation through late 2025 and early 2026 and is expected to be capable of being adopted by WBC as a material consideration for the determination of future planning applications.</p>
a)	<p>A coordinated and comprehensive landscape led approach to development of the whole Loddon Valley Garden Village to avoid piecemeal and ad-hoc development proposals.</p>	<p>The design approach to Newlands Farm has been landscape-led and integrated, to ensure a positive, sustainable and creative response to the Site constraints. The approach taken is consistent with that taken by the UoR and HFLL. This is explained further in the Design and Access Statement.</p>
b)	<p>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.</p>	<p>This application sets out a clear approach to land use, design and access through the parameter plans submitted. Key design considerations for the proposals are set out in the Design and Access Statement. These will be further refined through future Reserved Matters applications, having regard to the emerging Strategic Design Code.</p>
c)	<p>A strategy for the timely delivery of facilities and infrastructure necessary to support each phase of delivery and the garden village as a whole.</p>	<p>The WBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) provides a detailed account of the facilities, services and infrastructure needed to support the LVGV. This has been developed in consultation with Gleeson, the UoR and HFLL and has been framed around a deliverable trajectory of build-out for the development.</p>
D)	<p>A strategy for creating a distinctive and sustainable community, embracing the best of town and country and that delivers climate resilience.</p>	<p>The Site is a part of the wider LVGV, which has been conceived to achieve all of these aims.</p> <p>This application will deliver a discrete character area within the LVGV, informed by Site opportunities and constraints specific to the application Site and consistent with the Strategic Design Code being developed by WBC in partnership with the Gleeson and the other LVGV</p>

<b>Policy SS13 Principle</b>		<b>Assessment of application against principle</b>
		Landowners, and will be built to high standards of sustainable design, as set out in Chapter 10 of the Environmental Statement.
e)	A strategy for integrating and implementing arts and cultural activities including public art.	<p>This outline application does not itself put forward a specific Public Art Strategy, however it is expected that one will be required by planning condition, to ensure compliance at the Reserved Matters stage, in close consultation with WBC, the community and other stakeholders. This is expected to be a requirement of a site-wide planning condition, linked to the Section 106 agreement. Preparation of the Public Art Strategy will also be linked to the Strategic Design Code.</p> <p>Within this application Site, public open space and areas of public realm will provide opportunities for public art.</p> <p>Elsewhere in LVGV, through the UoR's application, there is provision for substantial amounts of Class F as well as Class E floorspace in the District Centre, which will facilitate a variety of cultural activities.</p>
<b>Landscape and green and blue infrastructure</b>		
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;	<p>This requirement is addressed in the UoR planning application which includes EcoValley.</p> <p>This planning application includes pedestrian and cycle connections to provide onward links to EcoValley.</p> <p>The proposals also integrate a network of green and blue infrastructure which connect to the wider network beyond the Site and the LVGV.</p>
b)	Protects and enhances the identified attributes of the River Loddon Valued Landscape and Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape;	<p>The landscape-led design approach to the LVGV has been developed by the Landowners, closely influenced by the attributes of the Valued Landscape areas within and close to the Site.</p> <p>The Site does not fall within a Valued Landscape. As set out in the LVIA, there has nonetheless been comprehensive analysis of the potential landscape impacts of the proposal, with this process having influenced Outline application proposals in order to ensure an appropriate response, such as the careful treatment of the edges of the development.</p>
c)	Provide a network of connected, accessible and high-quality open spaces	As set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement, this application makes provision for a

<b>Policy SS13 Principle</b>		<b>Assessment of application against principle</b>
	that includes tree lined streets, opportunities for local food growing and natural play, that integrate with the wider green and blue infrastructure network;	<p>substantial amount of open space of different typologies, including areas for food production.</p> <p>The proposed tree planting incorporates the planting of avenues and individual specimen street trees integrated within highway verges and with SUDs features. This will contribute to high-quality placemaking and quality of life.</p>
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;	<p>Substantial, appropriate buffers have been retained and incorporated into this application, as shown in the submitted parameter plans.</p> <p>In particular, semi-natural green space will provide a buffer to the Dog Kennel Copse Ancient Woodland to the north-eastern corner of the Site as well as the boundary hedgerows and trees. The existing ditch and hedge in the northern part of the Site is retained and incorporated into the layout as a green corridor and active travel route.</p> <p>Further information can be found within the accompanying Arboricultural Impact Assessment.</p>
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;	In line with WBC's Greenway proposals, the access incorporates a new Greenway connection providing for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. This connects to the public right of way (ARB03) to the west. In addition, pedestrian and cycle connections will link to the wider network of public rights of way.
f)	Contributes to establishing the Loddon long distance footpath for active travel;	A new footpath along the River Loddon is incorporated into EcoValley and will be delivered by the UoR, contributing towards the completion of the Loddon Long Distance Footpath.
g)	Establishes clear and robust arrangements for future maintenance.	The future maintenance and management of public open space as well as green and blue infrastructure will be the subject of a Management Plan that will be formally secured by Section 106 agreement and by planning condition. This will itself be the subject of consultation and engagement with the Council and relevant stakeholders.
<b>Drainage and flood alleviation</b>		
7.	Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive drainage and flood alleviation strategy that:	A comprehensive drainage and flood alleviation strategy has been developed for the Site, as set out within the accompanying Flood Risk Assessment Drainage Strategy documents by Abley Letchford.
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	As set out in the Design and Access Statement, care has been taken to ensure that SuDS features are located and designed in such a way as to complement the area both visually and in terms of ecology as well as fulfilling their required drainage function. These are shown in the

<b>Policy SS13 Principle</b>		<b>Assessment of application against principle</b>
		drainage proposals accompanying this application produced by Abley Letchford and the landscape design drawings by Savills including the Attenuation Basin Planting Plans.
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		The proposals in this application contribute towards the achievement of this objective and alongside the drainage and flood mitigation measures that will be delivered by the UoR and HFLL will contribute positively to the management of flood risk both within and beyond the Site. This is detailed further in the accompanying Flood Risk Assessment, Environmental Statement, and supporting drawings.
c) Establishes clear and robust arrangements for future maintenance.		The maintenance and management of drainage and SuDS features will be the subject of comprehensive planning conditions and S106 obligations consistent with this policy and accord with the WBC Infrastructure Development Plan.
<b>Biodiversity</b>		
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;	As set out in the accompanying Metric produced by EPR, a Biodiversity Net Gain of at least 10% will be achieved on the Site.
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;	A detailed assessment of this has been provided in the Environmental Statement (Chapter 11), in light of detailed Site surveys, taking into account the predicted impacts of the development and proposed mitigation.
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	Substantial, appropriate buffers to all relevant ecological designated areas have been incorporated into the parameter plans and will provide a formal template as to where built development can and cannot take place.
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).	The requisite quantity of SANG has been provided as part of the UoR's planning application in EcoValley. This amount of SANG is sufficient to meet the needs of the entire LVGV.
<b>Housing</b>		
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	This application has been conceived on the basis of adhering to Policy H1 of the LPU, and other relevant policies. However as set out in Section 10 of this

<b>Policy SS13 Principle</b>		<b>Assessment of application against principle</b>
	identified housing needs and demands as set out in the Council's most up to date evidence of housing need;	statement, and in the accompanying Affordable Housing Statement by Pioneer, the affordable housing mix is for further consideration and discussion with WBC through the course of this application.
b)	Applies designs which support spaces suitable for home working; and	There will be opportunity to deliver a variety of housing types and to ensure that an appropriate proportion of these will include spaces for home working. Although this Outline application does not itself submit specific house types or layouts for consideration, subsequent Reserved Matters application/s will address such matters, consistent with appropriately-worded planning conditions and the Strategic Design Code.
c)	Shows how the mix of housing types, sizes and tenures will be coordinated through each phase of delivery.	<p>Recognising that LVGV will be delivered over a long period across numerous parcels and stages, it is proposed to formalise (by condition) a Housing Implementation Strategy, to be submitted to and approved by WBC. Each subsequent Reserved Matters application will be required to demonstrate how it adheres to this strategy, to ensure each phase of residential development provides an appropriate mix.</p> <p>This Housing Implementation Strategy will be updated as the development progresses with each update being first submitted to and approved in writing by WBC.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the housing here will be delivered within the early phases of the delivery of the LVGV, thus contributing to the housing trajectory relatively early in the plan period.</p>
<b>Employment and Jobs</b>		
	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.	<p>The UoR's planning application will deliver substantial business space within the District and Local Centre. These will offer flexible accommodation at the small and medium scale, to complement larger-scale commercial development at Thames Valley Science Park being brought forward under other applications.</p> <p>The Site is located within 800m of the District Centre and will be linked to it by a number of active travel routes.</p>
<b>Sustainable design and construction</b>		
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	A comprehensive approach is proposed which will address energy, whole life carbon, resources, human-centric design, landscape and ecology, and sustainable transport.

<b>Policy SS13 Principle</b>		<b>Assessment of application against principle</b>
	green and blue infrastructure are appropriately used to reduce energy demand and deliver climate resilient neighbourhoods;	These share the common objective of reducing energy demand and providing climate resilience. These principles will be secured via planning condition and developed into further detail through the Reserved Matters stage, informed by the Strategic Design Code.
b)	Implements the energy hierarchy at all scales and demonstrates a fabric first approach;	<p>The project aspires to achieve net zero emissions through a 'fabric first' approach in addition to implementing energy-efficient systems.</p> <p>The preliminary energy strategy for the Site, as set out within the Climate Change Statement by Savills, includes the recommendation to optimise fabric performance with high levels of insulation, airtight construction and minimised 'thermal bridges'.</p>
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;	<p>A fully electric energy approach will be taken with efficient air source heat pumps for heating and hot water. The energy strategy proposes the installation of photovoltaic (PV) panels on suitable roof spaces to convert sunlight into electricity. The scheme will also explore a range of innovative technologies and strategies that optimise energy use and maximise the benefits of renewable energy generation.</p> <p>Annual carbon emissions for the proposed development have been estimated using the adopted energy strategy and current industry benchmarks. The Climate Change Statement sets out that by 2042, total emissions are projected to be reduced by 93% compared to a baseline compliant with today's Building Regulations.</p> <p>The energy strategy for the Site will be developed in more detail at the Reserved Matters stage.</p>
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	The scheme will assess and minimise whole life carbon, comprising regulated, unregulated and embodied carbon emissions. Resource efficiency and circular economy principles will be prioritised.
e)	Provide measures to reduce water consumption.	Strategies that can be incorporated at the Reserved Matters stage include low-flow fixtures and flow restrictors that reduce water flow while maintaining pressure. Additionally, rainwater collection systems could be installed in each house, allowing the use of collected rainwater for gardening and internal use for the WC.
<b>Transport</b>		
12.	Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive sustainable transport strategy that has been informed by a detailed Transport Assessment and:	

<b>Policy SS13 Principle</b>		<b>Assessment of application against principle</b>
a)	Provides layouts, street designs and associated measures that are safe, suitable and convenient for all users, which prioritise active travel, and facilitates high quality public transport services both within and to key destinations beyond the garden village. This will include:	<p>As set out in the Design and Access Statement and Transport Assessment, these principles have been incorporated into this application through means such as an effective street hierarchy; pedestrian, bus and cycle connectivity; and the integration of green infrastructure and public realm strategy.</p> <p>The application will contribute towards the delivery of the Bus and Active Travel Strategies developed for the LVGV on behalf of the Landowners.</p>
i)	The phased delivery of active travel and public transport measures;	<p>New high-quality bus services are proposed, operating between the Site and key destinations such as Reading, Wokingham and Winnersh. The Public Transport Strategy has been formulated on the basis of providing new services in a phased manner, with increased frequency over time. Rather than relying on the re-routing of any existing services, new services are provided. This ensures there will be an increase in bus accessibility in the area and avoids detracting from the level of service along existing routes.</p>
ii)	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	<p>There is already an expansive network of pedestrian and cycle links routing within and around the site which provides an excellent basis from which to build from to help ensure that travel by foot and cycle is maximised. Various opportunities are therefore included to reflect the differing character areas, the anticipated level of usage and also the nature of the trips that are being catered for.</p> <p>For example, segregated cycleways will be provided to a high specification along the primary streets, and these will be supplemented by an extensive network of shared use footways / cycleways to run alongside the main highway corridors as well as through areas of green space. Off-road routes follow corridors which respond positively to the WBC's planned Greenway networks in the area. A network of other, less formal, paths will also be provided along the peripheries of the development which will complement and enhance the public rights of ways in these areas.</p> <p>The routes have been designed so that they will integrate seamlessly with those being delivered by the other Landowners within the LVGV.</p>
iii)	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	<p>Facilities such as these are typically located within reasonable walk and cycle distances from the Site and hence represent a significant opportunity for active travel. Accordingly, this application incorporates measures to facilitate pedestrian and cycle trips onto the adjacent networks (directly or via routes being delivered by the UoR and HFLL). These works include the enhancement of</p>

<b>Policy SS13 Principle</b>		<b>Assessment of application against principle</b>
	Park, Mereoak Park and Ride, Green Park, Green Park Station, Shinfield, Lower Earley, Winnersh and Winnersh Triangle Station.	<p>routes beyond the Site such as improvements to the existing shared use footway / cycleway facilities along the Shinfield Eastern Relief Road and Lower Earley Way.</p> <p>A more detailed account of this is provided in the Transport Assessment which accompanies this application.</p>
b)	Demonstrates that the design of the access arrangements and the associated highway improvements take into account all the planned development; and	Detailed drawings of the proposed access arrangements are submitted with this application, which have been configured following extensive pre-application engagement and technical refinement. The Transport Assessment and the Environmental Statement provide a detailed analysis of impacts based on up-to-date highway modelling that has been produced in conjunction with WBC.
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.	
<b>Utilities</b>		
13.	Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive utility and digital infrastructure and communications strategy. This will include:	
a)	The phased delivery of water, foul water, sewerage and electricity upgrades; and	The LVGV will bring forward a comprehensive programme of utility infrastructure upgrades to support the emerging development in accordance with the WBC IDP. Further details on how this application will contribute towards the delivery of the new infrastructure is set out in the accompanying Utility Statement by BTS.
b)	The phased delivery of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) connectivity, including access to full-fibre gigabit-capable broadband; and 4G and 5G mobile technologies.	
<b>Minerals and waste</b>		
14.	The potential for on-Site minerals resources which may be winnable through prior extraction should be informed by minerals resource assessments. Where viable, development proposals should respond and implement a strategy for prior extraction.	<p>The Geotechnical Desk Study for the Site confirms that no superficial minerals deposits are indicated to be present within the site boundary on latest available mapping. Unlike other parts of the LVGV, the Site also does not contain any land designated as a MSA.</p> <p>On this basis a Minerals Resource Assessment is not submitted with this application.</p>
<b>Stewardship</b>		
15.	Development proposals should proceed in accordance with an agreed strategy for the long-term governance and stewardship arrangements for community assets, including country park, open spaces, public realm areas and community and other relevant facilities.	<p>This strategy will be produced collaboratively by the LVGV Landowners and WBC, and secured by planning condition, following consultation with the local community, and having regard to the emerging Local Plan Update and Strategic Design Code. It will have regard to such matters as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The roles and responsibilities of any governance body or board;</li> </ul>

Policy SS13 Principle	Assessment of application against principle
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Long-term management and maintenance of common areas;</li><li>• Community initiatives and resident participation;</li><li>• The use of any maintenance charges;</li><li>• Ensuring consistency with the overall vision for the Site and Design Code.</li></ul>

# 9. Technical Assessment

## 9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 This section of the statement assesses key technical considerations related to Newlands Farm, through a summary of the technical documents that accompany the planning application that identify the impacts of the development and how these will be addressed (the full documents should be referred to for their detailed analysis and conclusions). It assesses the proposed development against the relevant planning policy context within the Development Plan and other material considerations, as already identified in Section 7 above.

## 9.2 Design

9.2.1 Chapter 12 of the NPPF provides guidance on achieving well-designed places. Paragraph 135 requires that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”*

9.2.2 Various policies from the adopted Development Plan that have the aim of achieving high quality design are discussed under other headings of this chapter, such as Climate Change and Sustainability and Health and Wellbeing.

9.2.3 The emerging Local Plan Update includes a specific policy on place making and quality design: Policy DH1. This requires all new development to be of high-quality design to endure over the lifetime of the development and create a strong sense of place. The policy sets out design principles that should be achieved.

9.2.4 A detailed account of the design principles is set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement. This sets out an overarching vision of the development that recognises that this proposal will be an integral part of the wider LVGV. The masterplan shows how the scheme will align with the wider allocation and positively contribute to the creation of an exemplar Garden Community.

9.2.5 The scheme is designed to offer residential and community facilities at the heart of the development, linked by green and blue infrastructure. Recreational spaces and informal paths throughout the Site will encourage play, fitness and communal activities.

9.2.6 The permeable layout introduces distinctive streets within defined character areas and respects the wider landscape with a generous network of open spaces and green corridors that conserve and enhance biodiversity. There will be many options for residents to access the wider public rights of way network and enjoy the wider landscape.

9.2.7 The key features of the Illustrative Masterplan include:

- New Dwellings with a mix of types & tenures;
- Equipped Play Spaces Distributed Across the Site;
- Trim Trails following key routes;
- An accessible Blue/Green Corridor
- Informal recreational routes;
- Areas for communal food production;
- Central Green spaces;
- Improved pedestrian & cycle connectivity to local amenities;
- Integrated SuDS features to mitigate flood risk & promote biodiversity; and
- New formal and informal tree planting.

9.2.8 At the Reserved Matters stage, the new homes will be designed to reflect the character and aesthetic qualities of the surrounding area. High quality, vernacular materials for homes will aid the integration of this development within the LVGV and the wider locality. All roads will be designed to adequate widths and turning to accommodate refuse collection vehicles. The majority of vehicular parking spaces will be provided on plot – either in garages or on driveways. In some instances, it may be necessary to provide some on street allocated parking spaces or rear parking courts to facilitate car free pedestrianised zones. Parking provision will accord with WBC standards.

9.2.9 The proposed central Spine Road which will run north-south through the centre of the Site, alongside a dedicated cycle path which will facilitate active travel routes in this direction. From the central Spine Road, a simple structure of secondary routes either form loops through the development or terminate with tertiary routes in the form of private drives.

9.2.10 The wider LVGV Site will provide a range of essential facilities and services, including primary and secondary schools, local centres, a sports hub and a supermarket. A comprehensive network of walking and cycling routes is planned in this development to provide direct and convenient routes to these facilities, which fall within an appropriate 800m. The design seeks to maximise the opportunities to walk and cycle for local journeys.

9.2.11 The indicative density strategy set out in the DAS is sympathetic to the rural south whilst maintaining the higher density which runs along the Spine Road, defined by terraced built form providing a continual frontage with apartment buildings located at key nodal points. The proposals allow for up to 4- storey buildings, again the higher buildings will be located centrally along the Spine Road. On rural edges, heights will be limited to two storeys.

9.2.12 The existing green & blue networks running through the Site have been integrated into the development through landscaped corridors, which combine existing green/blue infrastructure with new habitat planting, SuDS, public open space.

9.2.13 Key features of the Site, such as the boundary vegetation and existing hedgerows running through the Site are to be retained within green corridors where possible to give an improved setting to these elements. Generous buffer planting will wrap around the development together with a sequence of green spaces which extend into the development and act as focus points within the parcels.

9.2.14 The development will draw influence from the architectural character of the nearby settlement of Arborfield in accordance with WBC's Design Guide. There will also be opportunity to create a distinct place identity arising from the LVG to the north, where more contemporary architecture could work in harmony with traditional village typologies. An indicative palette of materials includes natural tones of render with timber cladding, alongside various brick types and coloured window frames to assist with the creation of different character areas at the detailed stage.

9.2.15 Work to further establish how these principles will be delivered will continue through the Strategic Design Code process (working closely with WBC), and through the Reserved Matters process which will adhere to all the agreed principles.

## 9.3 Climate Change and Sustainability

9.3.1 Paragraph 164 of the NPPF sets out that new development should be planned for in ways that:

*"Avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through incorporating green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems; and*

*help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings in plans should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards."*

9.3.2 Within the adopted Core Strategy, Policy CP1 (Sustainable development) expects development to contribute towards the goal of reaching zero-carbon developments, include appropriate on-site renewable energy features, and minimise energy and waste consumption by measures including the use of appropriate layout and orientation, building form, design and construction, to take account of microclimate so as to minimise carbon dioxide emissions through giving careful consideration to how all aspects of development form.

9.3.3 Within the MDD, Policy CC04 (Sustainable Design and Construction) requires developments to seek to deliver high quality sustainably designed and constructed development. Policy CC05 (Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks) encourages local opportunities to contribute towards decentralised energy supply from renewable and low-carbon technologies. It further states that planning permission will only be granted for proposals that deliver a minimum 10% reduction in carbon emissions through renewable energy or low carbon technology.

9.3.4 Chapter 6 of the emerging LPU relates to Climate Change and Energy. Policy CE1 (Design principles for efficient buildings) requires development proposals to adequately demonstrate the following design principles have been considered:

- Orientation of buildings;
- Form of buildings;
- Fabric of buildings;
- Heat Supply; and
- Renewable energy generation.

9.3.5 Policy CE3 (Environmental standards for residential development) relates to residential development proposals and sets out a number of requirements that must be met and set out in an Energy and Sustainability Statement.

9.3.6 Policy CE4 (Supporting a circular economy) supports development proposals which demonstrate compatibility with, or furthering of, a strong circular economy in the local area. A Sustainability

Statement is submitted with this application which includes a high-level strategy on implementing circularity principles in line with this policy.

- 9.3.7 Policy CE5 (Embodied carbon) requires development proposals to take opportunities to reduce the development's embodied carbon content, through the careful choice, use and sourcing of materials. How the development has sought to do this is covered in the accompanying Sustainability Statement.
- 9.3.8 Due to the outline nature of the application, the proposed energy strategy is indicative and will be confirmed during Reserved Matters applications. A preliminary energy strategy has been developed which aims to minimise carbon dioxide emissions and enhance sustainability. It follows the principles of the energy hierarchy which involves reducing energy use through passive and energy-efficient design, delivering clean energy and utilising renewable energy sources to propose the following mitigation measures.
- 9.3.9 A 'fabric first' approach will be taken, combined with passive design strategies to minimise demand. This will be supported by the use of efficient active systems within buildings. Green technologies such PV panels will then be considered on Site to offset any remaining operational emissions. The project aspires to achieve net zero emissions.
- 9.3.10 The scheme will assess and minimise whole life carbon, comprising regulated, unregulated and embodied carbon emissions. Resource efficiency and circular economy principles will be prioritised. Waste management and water conservation strategies will be implemented. The design will also focus on protecting green spaces, preventing soil erosion and promoting sustainable transportation to reduce environmental impact.
- 9.3.11 Sustainable drainage and flood risk has been accounted for, including an allowance for climate related changes to rainfall patterns. The biodiversity strategy for the Site will secure a biodiversity net gain of at least 10%, enhance ecosystems by creating diverse habitats and use drought-resistant plants. Native species will be prioritised to support local wildlife.
- 9.3.12 Once the development is complete, measures to encourage green living will be implemented including car clubs, EV charging stations, cycle hire services, cycle parking and dedicated pedestrian and cycle routes.
- 9.3.13 An overheating strategy will be further developed at the Reserved Matters stage with the aim of providing healthy living environments. Key points of this strategy will include the use of an adaptive approach for thermal comfort in naturally ventilated buildings.
- 9.3.14 Measures in a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) that will be secured via a planning condition will ensure that, where possible, construction activities generating GHG emissions are undertaken efficiently in order to minimise emissions.
- 9.3.15 Climate risks to buildings and future occupants, including overheating, storm damage, and subsidence, are also considered to be moderate and significant. These risks can be mitigated through appropriate design measures, including orientation, shading, ventilation, and compliance with Building Regulations, reducing the residual effect to low and not significant. These can all be incorporated at the Reserved Matters stage.

## 9.4 Transport and Access

- 9.4.1 Chapter 9 of the NPPF relates to Promoting Sustainable Transport. Paragraph 115 requires that:

*"a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the Site, the type of development and its location;*  
*b) safe and suitable access to the Site can be achieved for all users;*  
*c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflect current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and*  
*d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach."*

9.4.2 Paragraph 116 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

9.4.3 Within the adopted Development Plan, Policy CP6 (Managing Travel Demand) of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure development proposals provide for sustainable forms of transport to allow choice, improve the existing infrastructure network, enhance facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, mitigate any adverse effects upon the local and strategic transport network that arise from the development proposed, enhance road safety and do not cause highway problems or lead to traffic related environmental problems.

9.4.4 Policy CC07 (Parking) of the MDD requires proposed parking provision to meet the standards set out in Appendix 2 of the MDD. The standards provided differ depending on whether the location is urban, town and fringe or village.

9.4.5 Within the emerging Local Plan Update, Policy C1 (Active and sustainable transport and accessibility) requires development proposals to support the delivery of active and sustainable transport. The policy sets out the following requirements:

- prioritise travel by active means (including walking, cycling and wheeling), public transport and incorporate inclusive infrastructure which provides connections to and within the development;
- development proposals should support the increased uptake of electric and zero emissions vehicles;
- ensure development is located where people of all ages and level of physical ability are able, or will be able, to access a wide range of essential social, community, and cultural facilities;
- optimise accessibility and connectivity both within the proposed development and in the surrounding area, which includes having regard to schemes identified in cycling and walking strategies;
- make active travel (including walking, cycling and wheeling) the mode of choice for shorter journeys, both within and outside the site, including safe and attractive links to new and existing facilities, services, bus stops, train stations and existing non-motorised routes;
- ensure buildings and spaces are inclusively designed to be legible and permeable for all, and provide for the delivery of, and improvement to, walking and cycling routes that serve the site, the wider area and adjoining development parcels;

- reduce reliance on single occupancy car trips and prioritise and increase the use of sustainable transport modes;
- maximise opportunities to provide improved and viable public and community transport and other mobility services and routes, including through active engagement with providers as appropriate;
- maximise integration of, and interchange between, sustainable transport modes;
- embrace opportunities to minimise congestion and delay, as part of an effective strategy to manage harmful emissions and improve air quality;
- facilitate transport innovations and solutions which reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

9.4.6 Policy C2 (Mitigation of transport impacts and highways safety and design) requires development proposals to fully assess the transport impacts of the development and provide for appropriate mitigation to minimise the adverse effects. With regards to highway safety and design, Policy C2 requires development proposals to implement a proportionate package of measures that:

- Ensure safe and suitable access to the Site for all users;
- Contribute towards a high quality public realm designed in accordance with Living Streets (or any successor document), user access hierarchy and demonstrate how the relevant principles of Healthy Streets have been incorporated;
- Prioritise pedestrian, cycling and sustainable transport in accordance with Policy C1;
- Design roads to optimise traffic flows to avoid adverse environmental impacts; and
- Provide effective, convenient and safe delivery, collection, servicing and refuse, and recycling collection arrangements.

9.4.7 Policy C3 (Active travel) requires development proposals to promote sustainable transport by prioritising active travel including walking, wheeling and cycling.

9.4.8 As set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement, Parameter Plans and Transport Assessment, each of the above principles and Policy requirements has been incorporated into the application proposals, maximising the potential for active and sustainable transport modes.

9.4.9 WBC has developed its own traffic model in order to establish future year traffic flows for scenarios with and without the development and this model has been used to underpin the analysis provided by the submitted Transportation Assessment, allowing for a comprehensive approach that incorporates background traffic growth, committed development and other planned growth in the area. It allows for “with” and “without” development scenarios to be calculated at 2032 and 2040.

9.4.10 The modelling methodology and scope of the transport appraisal encompasses the road links and junctions depicted in the figures attached to the Environmental Statement. The Environmental Statement also establishes a baseline that includes public transport routes, walking and cycling routes and facilities within the proximity of the Site. Accident data allows for an appraisal of the effects on road safety.

9.4.11 The proposed scheme will connect to the facilities and services provided within the wider LVGV to the north via the Spine Road for pedestrians, cycles and vehicles alongside further points of pedestrian and cycle access. These are designed to connect with the proposed comprehensive

active travel network across the LVGV. Once fully developed, the proposed development will take buses via the Spine Road within the UoR parcel to the north. All bus stops will be located within a 400m walking distance of all proposed dwellings and will provide frequent connections between the Site and Reading, Wokingham and Winnersh Station.

- 9.4.12 A suite of mitigation measures for LVGV are embedded in the WBC traffic model, including additional lanes at key roundabouts, new links to the Winnersh and Eastern Relief Roads, carriageway widening and junction improvements throughout the study area. These works are phased up to 2032 or 2040.
- 9.4.13 The Assessment considers the impacts of both the construction and operational (post completion) stages. When assessing the potential for adverse effects, account is taken of the magnitude of change in the context of the sensitivity of each location.
- 9.4.14 During the construction phase, the main impact will be HGV movements along Mole Road, Sindlesham Road and Reading Road, roads of medium sensitivity. However, the increase in HGV movements when spread over a working day equates to a maximum of approximately 8 movements per hour, i.e. one movement every 7½ minutes. This is a low level of increase in real terms and is unlikely to be significant.
- 9.4.15 To help mitigate any adverse effects, Gleeson proposes a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), that can be secured by condition. This will establish measures to ensure that construction traffic is managed to avoid the network peaks period where possible, so as to reduce inconvenience and delay to other roads users.
- 9.4.16 During the operational phase, additional car trips are modelled for the interim 2032 baseline (325 dwellings) and the fully built 2040 baseline (340 dwellings) at all 21 locations in the study area. The model shows that only one location (Reading Road) will experience an increase in traffic of above 10%. An increase in traffic of less than 10% is not considered significant under the methodology of the Environmental Statement. That methodology requires Reading Road to be assessed further.
- 9.4.17 The increase in traffic on Reading Road is forecast to be 13% in 2032 and 15.8% in 2040. This is considered to have a negligible impact on severance, driver stress and delay, pedestrian delay and non-motorised user amenity, all of which are considered in the Environmental Statement.
- 9.4.18 Similarly, a negligible effect is predicted in terms of fear and intimidation and road safety.
- 9.4.19 Given the scale of the overall LVGV and other large scale residential developments in the area, it is important to consider the Cumulative effects on the three roads discussed above. Some Minor Adverse impacts are predicted in 2040 along Arborfield Road in terms of severance, driver stress and delay and fear and intimidation. However, the proposed mitigation of a shared foot and cycle route would reduce the residual effect to, at worst, Negligible with a Moderate Beneficial impact on Fear and Intimidation. The residual Minor Adverse impact on Driver Stress and Delay along Sindlesham Road is not considered significant.
- 9.4.20 Given the transport and highway effects range from minor adverse effects to moderate beneficial effects, in the context of paragraph 116 of the NPPF, we consider there is no justification for resisting this proposal on highway safety grounds

## 9.5 Ecology and Biodiversity

- 9.5.1 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF sets out that planning decisions should minimise impacts on and provide net gains in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs.

9.5.2 Within the adopted Development Plan, Policy CP7 (Biodiversity) sets out that development:

- A) Which may harm county designated Site's (Local Wildlife Site's in Berkshire), whether directly or indirectly, or*
- B) Which may harm habitats or, species of principle importance in England for nature conservation, veteran trees or features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna (including wildlife and river corridors), whether directly or indirectly, or*
- C) That compromises the implementation of the national, regional, county and local biodiversity action plans*

*Will be only permitted if it has been clearly demonstrated that the need for the proposal outweighs the need to safeguard the nature conservation importance, that no alternative Site that would result in less or no harm is available which will meet the need, and:*

- i) Mitigation measures can be put in place to prevent damaging impacts;*  
*or*
- ii) Appropriate compensation measures to offset the scale and kind of losses are provided."*

9.5.3 Policy TB23 (Biodiversity and Development) of the MDD sets out that development proposals must demonstrate how that:

- "a) Provide opportunities, including through design, layout and landscaping to incorporate new biodiversity features or enhance existing*
- b) Provide appropriate buffer zones between development proposals and designated Site's as well as habitats and species of principle importance for nature conservation*
- c) Ensure that all existing and new developments are ecologically permeable through the protection of existing and the provision of new continuous wildlife corridors, which shall be integrated and linked to the wider green infrastructure network."*

9.5.4 Chapter 11 of the LPU relates to the Natural Environment. Policy NE1 (Biodiversity and geodiversity) sets out that development proposals should protect and enhance biodiversity and/or geodiversity features of conservation value and implement appropriate conservation management. The degree of protection will be proportionate to the status of the site or species in terms of its international, national and/or local importance.

9.5.5 The policy requires development proposals to demonstrate through a suitable level of ecological survey information and assessment how they conserve and enhance biodiversity and/or geodiversity including their long-term management.

9.5.6 An extensive programme of field surveys across the Site have been carried out between 2022 and 2025 and are included within the planning application submission. Surveys include:

- Habitat Survey;
- Badger Survey
- Nighttime Bat Walkover Surveys
- Automated Bat Detector Surveys
- Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA)
- Breeding Bird Surveys
- Winter Bird Surveys
- Hazel Dormouse Habitat Assessment

- Invertebrate Survey
- Water Vole and Otter Habitat Suitability Survey

9.5.7 Internationally Designated Statutory Sites and Nationally Designated Statutory Sites are located within 5km of the site. There are also Non-Statutory Designed Sites within and surrounding the site, including the Local Wildlife Sites within 2km of the Site, some of which are within the wider LVGV.

9.5.8 There are mitigation measures inherent to the design of the proposals, including appropriate buffer zones around all important features such as hedgerows and woodlands. A CEMP, that will be secured by condition, could prescribe measures to prevent and mitigate dust, noise, lighting and other forms of pollution, including artificial lighting. This will help protect important ecological habitats and features during the construction phase.

9.5.9 Natural and amenity greenspace has been incorporated into the Illustrative Masterplan. Around 40 hectares of SANG and a further 18 hectares of SANG link are provided in the wider LVGV, with EcoValley and will address the requirements for SAN of this application. This will avoid adverse impacts on the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area.

9.5.10 Subject to the inherent design measures, the main impact during the construction phase will be the loss of 340 metres of hedgerow which will lead to the fragmentation of linear habitats and have impacts on local biodiversity, particularly species which rely on these features to maintain connectivity through the local landscape, such as bats. This will result a significant negative effect at the local level that will ultimately outweighed by the proposed planting scheme as part of the proposals for the Operational phase.

9.5.11 During the Operational phase, the potential for this proposal to lead to increased visitor numbers to designated ecological Sites is offset by the SANG provisions in the wider LVGV.

9.5.12 The Site's woodland will be incorporated into a conservation-led management regime to improve its value to local biodiversity. Habitat management measures will be secured through a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan. An additional 112m of hedgerow will be planted onsite and be covered by the management regime to again improve biodiversity value.

9.5.13 No significant impacts on bat activity is anticipated as the majority of foraging and commuting habitats are to be retained within the proposed natural greenspaces. Bat boxes will be strategically placed throughout the proposals where they are most likely to be found and utilised by bats. Tree-mounted bat boxes and 'veteranisation' of mature trees would provide further roosting opportunities.

9.5.14 Table 9.2 outlines further requirements of Policy NE1 of the emerging LPU and how the Proposed Development accords with these.

**Table 9.2: Assessment of development proposals against Emerging Local Plan Update Policy NE1 Requirements**

	<b>Emerging Local Plan Update Policy NE1 Requirements</b>	<b>Details of the proposed development</b>
3a	Avoids fragmentation of existing habitats and provides coherent ecological connectivity and permeability that is integrated and linked to the wider green and blue infrastructure network, through the restoration, enhancement and connection of: linear features such as wildlife corridors; stepping stones; and any nature recovery networks (including links to habitats outside the borough).	Green corridors are included within the Proposed Development to aid in species movement through the Site and increase permeability in the local landscape. This will enable species to more easily shift their distributions over time to adapt to local climates. Proposals for habitat creation

	<b>Emerging Local Plan Update Policy NE1 Requirements</b>	<b>Details of the proposed development</b>
		include extensive habitat creation and natural open space.
3b	Incorporates beneficial biodiversity and/or geodiversity conservation features and enhances existing features through design, layout and landscaping.	The Proposed Development incorporates extensive measures to benefit biodiversity including enhancing existing features and incorporating measures to increase resilience to anticipated climate change.
3c	Provides or retains appropriate buffer zones between development proposals and designated sites, protected species, priority species or priority habitats or main rivers, which are informed by detailed Site - based assessment.	As set out above, the Proposed Development includes appropriate buffer zones.
3d	Seeks to eradicate or control any invasive non-native species present on Site.	Management Plans for the Site will include the removal of invasive species where present.
3e	Is compatible with any national, regional, county, and local biodiversity action plans, Local Nature Recovery Strategy and/or other strategic conservation management plans for species or habitats.	Relevant biodiversity plans and strategies have informed the design of the Proposed Development and the preparation of the ES Chapter on Ecology. Further information is included within the ES.
4	Development proposals likely to result in a significant effect on internationally designated sites either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the adverse effects on the integrity of the designated Site can be fully avoided, mitigated and/or compensated.	The wider Garden Village includes the delivery of over 40 hectares of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to avoid adverse impacts on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA
5	Development proposals that are likely to have an adverse effect on the notified features of a nationally designated Site will only be supported in exceptional circumstances, and provided it has been clearly demonstrated that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A suitable alternative Site with a lesser impact than that proposed is not available;</li> <li>b) The on-site biodiversity or geodiversity benefits of the proposal including, where applicable, the overall site or wider habitats network, clearly outweigh the impacts on the notified features of the site; and</li> <li>c) All appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures have been proposed and secured.</li> </ul>	Due to the distance to the Site, no impacts are predicted on SSSI's
6	Development proposals that are likely to result in the loss or deterioration of an irreplaceable habitat, (such as Ancient Woodland, ancient or veteran trees) will only be supported in exceptional circumstances, where:	Ancient Woodland will be retained within the proposal within appropriate buffer zones and incorporated into long term conservation management plans.

	Emerging Local Plan Update Policy NE1 Requirements	Details of the proposed development
	<p>a) A suitable alternative with a lesser impact than that proposed is not available;</p> <p>b) It has been adequately demonstrated that the irreplaceable habitat cannot be retained within the proposed development scheme;</p> <p>c) The need and benefits of the proposed development in that location and form clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration; and</p> <p>d) Adequate compensation measures are provided on Site wherever possible, and off-site where this is not feasible. The scale and quality of the compensation measures required will be commensurate to the loss or deterioration of the irreplaceable habitat and will be considered on a site -by-site basis, including their long-term management and maintenance.</p>	
7	<p>Development proposals which are likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of local importance (including priority species or priority habitats, and Site s that meet the criteria for designation as a Local Wildlife Site or Local Geological Site ) will only be supported where they accord with the following sequential approach:</p> <p>a) No alternative with a lesser impact is available;</p> <p>b) The need and benefits of the proposed development in that location and form clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration;</p> <p>c) All proportionate mitigation measures to minimise adverse effects are included within the development proposal; and</p> <p>d) As a last resort, secure appropriate compensation measures on-Site wherever possible, and off-Site where this is not feasible, including their long-term management and maintenance.</p>	<p>The implementation of mitigation measures is likely to result in a significant positive effect on sites of local importance.</p>

## 9.6 Biodiversity Net Gain

9.6.1 NPPF Paragraph 193 states that opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

9.6.2 The PPG includes guidance on BNG, which is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021). Under the statutory framework for BNG, subject to some exceptions, every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met ("the biodiversity gain condition"). This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the on-site habitat. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits.

9.6.3 Policy NE2 (Biodiversity net gain) of the LPU requires all development proposals to demonstrate a biodiversity net gain calculated via the most up-to-date national biodiversity accounting metric and

provide details of the long-term maintenance and management of the net gain. This should be delivered on Site in the first instance, or through biodiversity off-setting where appropriate. Policy SS13 (Loddon Valley Garden Village) requires the development proposals for the Site to achieve a measurable biodiversity net gain of at least 20%.

9.6.4 According to the statutory metric which is presented in the accompanying Environmental Statement (Appendix 11.6), the Proposed Development is predicted to result in a net gain of at least 11.19 area habitat units (20.81%), and 8.59 hedgerow units (45.19%). Further gains of up to 18.91 area habitat units (35.17%) and 11.73 hedgerow units (61.73%) can be achieved if amenity planting is implemented. The output generated by the statutory metric relates to habitats only, and does not account for the gains proposed for specific species groups, such as the inclusion of wildlife boxes.

## 9.7 SANG

9.7.1 Parts of the Site are located within 5km of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Policy CP8 (Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area) of the adopted Core Strategy, which derives originally from the South East Plan, states that development which alone or in combination is likely to have a significant effects on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures to avoid and mitigate any potential adverse effects are delivered.

9.7.2 Policy NE3 (Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area) of the LPU sets out that development proposals that are likely to have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA must demonstrate that adequate measures will be put in place to avoid or mitigate any such effects. Such measures must be agreed with the Council and Natural England.

9.7.3 Within the 400m - 5km zone, the policy requires development proposals for a net increase in dwellings to secure the SANG and SAMM standards set out within the policy. A minimum of 8 hectares of SANG land (after discounting to account for current access and capacity) will be provided per 1,000 new occupants. Development proposals for a net increase of more than 50 dwellings are expected to provide their own bespoke SANG.

9.7.4 Within the 5-7km zone, the policy states development proposals for a net increase of more than 50 dwellings may be required to provide mitigation measures based on a combination of SAMM and the provision of SANG to a lower standard than within the 400m - 5km zone. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with Natural England and, where appropriate, a Habitats Regulations Assessment may be required to ascertain whether the proposal could have an adverse effect on the SPA.

9.7.5 Following collaboration between Gleeson, the UoR and HFLL, SANG for all Landowners land is proposed to be provided within EcoValley, secured via the UoR's planning application. This approach will avoid adverse impacts on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. Within Eco Valley 40.27ha of SANG is proposed across two areas which are to be connected by approximately 18ha of SANG Link. This provision meets the requirements and guidance of Natural England in both quantitative and qualitative terms.

9.7.6 The SANG in EcoValley will be secured in perpetuity via a S106 agreement. This will protect these areas as accessible greenspace for members of the public and ensure their continued management. These areas will seek to provide attractive alternative recreational spaces for new and existing residents in the local area, thereby drawing visitors away from potentially sensitive sites, including the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, accessible SSSIs and LWSs. This provision will cater for the residents of this development.

9.7.7 The provision of SANG will ensure compliance with the above policies including Policy NE3 and Policy SS13 of the emerging LPU, and policy NRM6 from the South East Plan.

## 9.8 Agricultural Assessment

9.8.1 Paragraph 187b of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodlands. Best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land is defined in the NPPF glossary as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

9.8.2 Within the Core Strategy, Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development) sets out that development proposals should avoid areas of best and most versatile land.

9.8.3 Within the emerging LPU, Policy SS1 (Sustainable development principles) states that development proposals will be expected avoid the unplanned loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, except in exceptional circumstances.

9.8.4 An Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey has been undertaken at the Site by Reading Agricultural Consultants (RAC). This survey involved examining twenty six soil samples taken across the Site. The samples showed that the agricultural land quality on the Site is limited by soil wetness to either Subgrade 3a or 3b, depending on the severity of the limitation. Approximately 55% of the Site is considered Category 3a with the remainder 3b.

9.8.5 Whilst it is acknowledged that the development would entail the loss of some BMV agricultural land, the loss of Category 3a land is on the lower end of the BMV scale. Furthermore, this development forms part of the wider planned strategy for Wokingham Borough, with the Site having been selected following a robust assessment of alternatives through the Local Plan process, all of which would entail some BMV losses in a similar way. The application therefore is compliant with relevant provisions of local and national planning policy.

## 9.9 Arboriculture

9.9.1 Paragraph 136 of the NPPF sets out that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. It requires planning policies and decisions to ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. The right trees should be planted in the right places, and solutions should be found so that they are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.

9.9.2 Paragraph 193 of the NPPF states that development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as Ancient Woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

9.9.3 Within the Core Strategy, Policy CP7 (Biodiversity) states that development which may harm veteran trees or features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna, will only be permitted if it has been clearly demonstrated that the need for the proposal outweighs the need to safeguard the nature conservation importance, that no alternative Site that would result in less or no harm is available which will meet the need, and mitigation measures can be put in place to prevent damaging impacts or appropriate compensation measures to offset the scale and kind of losses are provided.

9.9.4 Policy CC03 (Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping) of the MDD sets out that development proposals should demonstrate how they have considered and achieved a number of criteria, including:

- Provide new or protect and enhance the Borough's Green Infrastructure networks, including the need to mitigate potential impacts of new development;
- Protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features; and
- Incorporate high quality, ideally, native planting and landscaping as an integral part of the scheme.

9.9.5 The policy goes on to say that development proposals which would result in the loss, fragmentation or isolation of areas of green infrastructure will not be acceptable.

9.9.6 Within the emerging Local Plan Update, Policy NE4 (Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows) sets out that development proposals should:

- Incorporate existing trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows and ensure they are well integrated within the public realm, in a suitably landscaped setting;
- Ensure the existing pattern of fields, hedges and hedgerows, woodland, trees, watercourses, water bodies, underlying topography and other landscape features are retained and that the design of the scheme is integrated into the landscape;
- Provide sufficient space to enable existing trees to thrive by maintaining adequate root protection areas and space for the trunk and branches to grow;
- Ensure buildings are carefully sited to limit excessive shading to residential properties;
- Provide appropriate buffer zones around woodlands, including semi-natural Ancient Woodlands, planted Ancient Woodland Sites, orchards, hedgerows and individual trees;
- Provide enhanced and additional tree and hedgerow planting wherever possible, but particularly where there are opportunities to restore or develop habitat and landscape links between woodlands and hedgerows and between these features and other landscape or habitat features such as river corridors;
- Maximise opportunities for planting urban trees, shrubs and hedges within streets and greenspace to create rich urban landscapes; and
- Demonstrate sufficient rooting volume of soil, irrigation and drainage for trees to thrive in the long term.

9.9.7 The draft policy also states that development proposals that are likely to affect trees, irreplaceable habitats (such as Ancient Woodland, ancient or veteran trees), hedges or hedgerows either on-site or nearby, should:

- Assess the health of all trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows affected, describing and assessing their value and the potential impact of the development as part of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment submitted with a planning application;
- Provide an appropriate Arboricultural Method Statement, including a Tree Constraints Plan and Tree and Woodland Protection Plan; and

- Ensure all tree and hedge/hedgerow protection measures are in place prior to works commencing on site, commensurate with any pre-commencement planning conditions.

9.9.8 Part 5 of the draft policy states that the loss, threat or damage to any tree, woodland, hedge or hedgerow of visual amenity, heritage or nature conservation value, will not be permitted unless the development proposal has been designed to avoid, reduce or minimise impact, or mitigation measures are incorporated as part of a development proposal, that provide equivalent character, visual amenity, heritage value, as well as habitat connectivity.

9.9.9 The Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) accompanying the application includes a baseline survey of all the existing trees on the Site. In line with the British Standard 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction, this Assessment has considered sixty-two trees of individual distinction, two groups of trees, eight hedgerows, and three woodland parcels. No notable, veteran or ancient trees are present. However, two Ancient Woodland parcels are identified.

9.9.10 The Site's predominant mature tree cover is English Oak; regardless of location and proximity to the Ancient Woodlands, the majority of these trees represent moderate to high-quality constraints due to their intrinsic arboricultural quality and/or landscape value. At least fifteen other tree species are present; the majority are native species occurring in both standard and hedgerow forms, Common Ash and Field Maple are the most frequent.

9.9.11 To provide vehicular and pedestrian access from Mole Road will unavoidably necessitate tree loss to accommodate the highway widening, in particular 3 Category B trees. Accordingly, the scheme is accompanied by a landscape strategy that seeks to compensate for this loss through the introduction of high-quality soft landscaping provision that reflects the rural setting, reinforces the retained tree cover and provides an uplift in canopy coverage.

9.9.12 The proposed development will affect seven category C hedgerows, including the removal of two sections from H1 amounting to 28m; a c5m section of H2; six sections of H4 amounting to 46m; two sections of H5 amounting to 177m; three sections from H6 amounting to 44m; a .14m section of H7; and a 5m section of H8. These removals are necessary for pedestrian and vehicular connectivity through the Site layout.

9.9.13 The remaining sections of all the hedgerows will continue to function effectively and maintain their structural and ecological integrity. Despite this loss, approximately 86% of hedgerow within influence of the proposals will be retained.

9.9.14 Approximately 7.4% of the Site is currently covered by tree canopy, including leaves, branches, and stems, as viewed from above. The proposed development will result in a modest reduction in canopy cover of approximately 0.4% prior to compensation. However, with the implementation of compensatory planting and landscape enhancements, the development will deliver a significant net gain in canopy cover across the Site.

9.9.15 The planting scheme will reinforce the green corridors created by retained trees and hedgerows, ensuring that these features can contribute to both biodiversity and site functionality. The reliance on a range of native species and cultivars of varying maturity and structural diversity will ensure a layered and resilient treescape.

9.9.16 The Illustrative Masterplan would introduce new footpath within the root protection areas of seven trees, necessitating a cellular confinement system to be installed to protect the tree roots and allow the footpath to be installed.

9.9.17 Based on the Illustrative Masterplan, the need for pruning work to accommodate the development proposal is expected to be low and limited to crown lifting works within proximity to access, highways and public open spaces.

9.9.18 Overall, there are no conflicts between this proposal and national and local policy.

## 9.10 Landscape and Visual Impact

9.10.1 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF seeks to ensure the protection and enhancement of Valued Landscapes.

9.10.2 Policy TB21 (Landscape Character) of the MDD requires proposals to demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment, including the landscape quality; landscape strategy; landscape sensitivity and key issues. The policy seeks to ensure proposals retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.

9.10.3 Policy NE5 (Landscape and drainage) of the LPU supports development proposals where they adopt a landscape led approach which protects and enhances the character and distinctiveness of landscapes. Its requirements include that development proposals:

- should be informed by, and respond to, the distinctive characters set out in the Landscape Character Assessment and other relevant assessments;
- should be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment.

9.10.4 NE5 also requires landscape schemes to be set within an overall masterplan for the proposed development, which:

- Include a structural tree, hedge and shrub planting schedule;
- Incorporate landscape spaces, public realm and green and blue infrastructure to achieve a sense of place, improve health and wellbeing and mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change;
- Incorporate effective built form and landscape transitions for rural-urban transition areas; and
- Set out a long-term landscape establishment and management plan, which prescribes and protects planting and its sustainability.

9.10.5 LPU Policy SS13 requires a coordinated and comprehensive landscape led approach to the development of Lod

9.10.6 London Valley Garden Village. The accompanying ES provides a full LVIA that assesses the impact of the development both during construction and post completion. This is provided at Chapter 14 of the ES.

9.10.7 The Site is covered by two National Landscape Character Areas. The northern part of the site lies within NCA115 Thames Valley, and the southern part of the Site is within NCA 129 Thames Basin Heaths. This boundary appears to be arbitrary and does not relate to obvious landscape differences within the Site.

9.10.8 The Thames Valley is characterised by flat low lying land, numerous hydrological features such as tributaries to the River Thames, medium sized irregular fields with an urban character. The Thames Basin Heaths stretches westwards from Weybridge in Surrey to the countryside around Newbury in Berkshire. It is described as a densely settled area with gardens amounting to a significant area of greenspace. The Site is not typical of either area.

9.10.9 Locally, the Site is located entirely in Character Area J2, 'Arborfield & Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay'. This area continues northwards to Sindlesham to the west of Mole Road and continues south

to include Arborfield and Arborfield Cross. This J2 area is characterised by gently undulating landscape in a wooded context, dominated by arable farming. Fields are large and geometric. Valuable attributes that are relevant to the Site include mature hedgerow trees, a rural settlement pattern and views across the landscape to the surrounding character areas. The ES considers the Site to have a medium landscape sensitivity.

- 9.10.10 The area to the east of the Site falls within the Bearwood Sand and Gravel character area, which is more of a rolling hills character that is heavily wooded. The ES considers this area to have a high value.
- 9.10.11 The Site is generally well concealed from the wider area, with screening provided by wooded hill terrain to the east and south (towards Arborfield Cross and The Coombes, Barkham) Dog Kennel Copse woodland and mature oaks along the ARBO3 byway to the north and Brick Kiln Coppice and housing along Church Lane and Mole Road to the west and south.
- 9.10.12 The LVIA has identified 11 main viewpoints of medium to high sensitivity that are the main focus of the assessment. The visual receptors using the public rights of way to the south of the Site (ARBO9 and ARBO10) have the highest sensitivity, reflecting their location within the draft Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape and the recreational status of users. Whilst closer to the Site, users of Mole Road have a 'low' overall sensitivity, given that they are road users rather than recreational visitors.
- 9.10.13 When considering the future impacts of the proposed scheme, inherent design mitigation within the proposals must be taken into account. This includes the provision of generous open space, retention of trees and hedgerows where possible, multi-functional green spaces, and buildings limited in height.
- 9.10.14 During construction, there would be no direct effects on the draft Valued Landscapes. There would be 'moderate adverse indirect' effects on the parts of the River Loddon and Barkham and Bearwood draft Valued Landscapes that have views of the construction Site. These areas are limited to a relatively small area of farmland to the north and south-east of the Site. All visual effects during construction are judged to be short-term and direct.
- 9.10.15 The completed scheme would initially have significant effects on the parts of the Wokingham Borough Council landscape character area 'J2 Arborfield and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay' that would have the new roads and buildings within it. The construction would have a 'direct moderate adverse' effect on this character area within the Site.
- 9.10.16 Visually, the main adverse effects would be on the viewpoints immediately within and surrounding the Site. Beyond this, natural screening is provided by the hillside terrain to the north and south and strong existing vegetation and around and within the Site. Inevitably the visual receptors within and immediately adjacent to the site are often going to experience significant changes to their views, given the proximity of the new development to the viewpoints.
- 9.10.17 Significant changes to views would only be experienced by users of Public Rights of Way immediately adjacent to the Site, such as ARB03.
- 9.10.18 The proposed extensive mitigation planting would, by Year 15, work to limit the harm caused by the proposals to an acceptable amount, given the policy context seeking development of Loddon Garden Village, and other benefits that will accrue from the development

## 9.11 Historic Environment

- 9.11.1 In accordance with Paragraph 207 of the NPPF and the adopted and emerging Development Plan, this planning application is accompanied by a Heritage Assessment which describes the significance of the heritage assets affected by the proposals, including the contribution made by their setting.

9.11.2 Paragraph 212 of the NPPF sets out that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 213 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.

9.11.3 Paragraph 215 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

9.11.4 Within the adopted Development Plan, Policy TB24 (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas) seeks to ensure the conservation and enhancement of designated heritage assets and their settings.

9.11.5 Policy DH5 (The historic environment) of the LPU also seeks to ensure development proposals conserve and, wherever possible, seek to enhance, the archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest of all heritage assets, including the contribution made by their setting. Where a development proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, clear and convincing justification will need to be provided to demonstrate the public benefits of the proposal that could not otherwise be achieved. The level of public benefit must outweigh any harm to a designated heritage asset.

9.11.6 As set out in the accompanying Environmental Statement (Chapter 9) there are no heritage assets within the Site so there will be no physical changes to any asset as a result of this development. The assessment therefore relates to the impacts on the setting of the various heritage assets in the vicinity of the Site.

9.11.7 The design of the proposals will benefit the setting of the nearby heritage assets in the manner in which development is pulled back from Site boundaries, the majority of hedges and trees are retained and there is extensive new planting. This will assist in preserving the rural setting of these buildings.

9.11.8 The Environmental Statement confirms that the proposals will have a negligible impact on the heritage assets, with the exception of Mole Bridge Farmhouse, where the change to the setting will cause a slight loss of significance to this High Sensitivity asset, resulting in a Minor Adverse effect.

9.11.9 Bringing forward development proposed on the Site has the capacity to give rise to up to a less than substantial degree of harm to the significance of identified designated built heritage assets. This harm, in line with Paragraph 215, must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. As discussed in Chapter 12, these benefits are wide ranging, covering economic, social, and environmental matters, and very substantial. Gleeson is confident that these benefits far outweigh the limited harm to heritage assets identified.

## 9.12 Archaeology

9.12.1 In accordance with paragraph 207 of the NPPF and emerging LPU Policy DH6 (Archaeology), this planning application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement which includes a chapter on Archaeology.

9.12.2 Paragraph 216 sets out that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

9.12.3 Policy DH6 (Archaeology) requires the archaeological assessment accompanying a planning application to explore and explain any likely impact of development upon archaeological remains. The policy sets out that development proposal should take appropriate measures to protect any

archaeological remains by preservation in situ. Where an assessment of archaeological potential demonstrates this is not justified or proportionate, applicants will be responsible for the excavation, recording and archiving of remains.

- 9.12.4 As set out in the accompanying ES (Chapter 8), there are five areas within the Site of archaeological interest. The proposed development will require the complete loss of the heritage interest of these areas. Archaeological evaluation is planned to take place via condition or, if required, during the determination period of the application. Should the evaluation identify archaeological remains, it is anticipated that a programme of archaeological excavation, recording, analysis and reporting would be agreed with the Council.
- 9.12.5 The areas of archaeological interest are considered to be of only local interest and by evaluating, recording them, the harm to their heritage interest is considered to be at the lower end of less than substantial under the NPPF. The evidence of ridge and furrow is not considered to be a notable example, so its loss is not considered material.
- 9.12.6 Gleeson is confident that the low level of less than substantial harm is comfortably outweighed by the substantial benefits of the proposed development, as set out within this Statement.

## 9.13 Hydrology and Flood Risk Assessment

- 9.13.1 Paragraph 181 of the NPPF sets out that when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in light of this assessment it can be demonstrated that:
  - a) within the Site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;*
  - b) the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient such that, in the event of a flood, it could be quickly brought back into use without significant refurbishment;*
  - c) it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate;*
  - d) any residual risk can be safely managed; and*
  - e) safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan."*
- 9.13.2 Paragraph 182 requires development proposals to incorporate sustainable drainage systems to control flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff, which also provide multifunctional benefits, through facilitating improvements in water quality and biodiversity, as well as benefits for amenity.
- 9.13.3 Policy CC09 (Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)) of the MDD requires all sources of flood risk to be taken into account at all stages to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding. The policy requires development to be guided to areas of lowest flood risk by applying the sequential approach.
- 9.13.4 Policy CC10 (Sustainable Drainage) of the MDD requires all development proposals to ensure surface water arising from the proposed development takes into account climate change in a sustainable manner. It requires all development proposals to:
  - a) Reproduce greenfield runoff characteristics and return run-off rates and volumes back to the original greenfield levels, for greenfield sites and for brownfield sites both run-off rates and volumes be reduced to as near greenfield as practicably possible.*

- b) Incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), where practicable, which must be of an appropriate design to meet the long term needs of the development, and which achieve wider social and environmental benefits*
- c) Provide clear details of proposed SuDS including the adoption arrangements and how they will be maintained to the satisfaction of the Council [as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)]*
- d) Not cause adverse impacts to the public sewerage network serving the development where discharging surface water to a public sewer."*

9.13.5 Chapter 10 of the LPU relates to Flooding and Drainage. Policy FD1 (Development and flood risk (from all sources)) states that development proposals must take into account at all stages of development, all sources of flood risk, including historic flooding, current and future impacts of climate change, and cumulative impacts. The policy sets out that development must be guided to areas of lowest flood risk, in the first instance, by applying the sequential approach, taking into account the effects of climate change and flooding from all sources. Development proposals in areas of flood risk will only be supported in exceptional circumstances where the criteria under section 5 of the policy can be met.

9.13.6 A Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy accompanies this planning application as required by the above policies, contained within Chapter 13 of the Environmental Statement. This confirms the Site itself is entirely within Flood Zone 1 and has a low risk of flooding from all sources. It is important to note the wider LVGV Site has areas of potential fluvial and pluvial flooding that are primarily located to the west of the River Loddon with some areas around the Barkham Brook and its tributaries. These areas are outside of the Site, but within the wider study area adopted for the purposes of the Environmental Statement.

9.13.7 As part of proposing the Site or allocation via LPU Policy SS13, WBC has confirmed it is suitable for development with an appropriate approach to development masterplanning and a robust mitigation strategy around flood risk and drainage. This was informed by WBC completing the Sequential Test for proposed allocated sites as part of the LPU, including for the proposed LVGV site allocation. It was concluded the LVGV passed the sequential test and is capable of accommodating the proposed quantum of development. The LPU requires development to reduce and minimise flood risk on site; in particular by sequentially locating development as well as to take opportunities to manage flood risk.

9.13.8 There are areas of the Site at risk of surface water flooding. The risk varies from Very Low to High, with the largest area is found along the eastern boundary. There is no risk within the Site of reservoir or sewer flooding.

9.13.9 The majority of the built development avoids indicative surface water flow routes, and the built development is set back appropriately from the ordinary watercourses / ditches within the Site. The implementation of a surface water drainage strategy incorporating SuDS will include infiltration and conveyance, attenuation and controlled discharge surface water runoff, thus mimicking existing greenfield conditions and reducing flood risk both on and off Site.

9.13.10 There is the potential for construction areas such as compounds and temporary works and facilities to be located in areas of potential flood risk. This could be a Minor or Moderate effect on construction workers. Where construction activities are necessary within potential flood risk areas the risk can be mitigated and managed through a suitable flood management plan. This will reduce the magnitude of the impact to Negligible or Minor.

9.13.11 There is the potential for both direct and indirect contamination to local ditches and watercourses from a pollution incident with the use and storage of machinery, equipment and materials on-site during construction. These risks will be minimised through mitigation measures contained in a

Construction Drainage Strategy that will incorporate pollution prevention and flood response measures to ensure that the potential for any temporary effects on water quality or flood risk are reduced as far as practicable during the construction stage. The Construction Drainage Strategy would likely form part of a CEMP.

- 9.13.12 The impacts of the Proposed Development on the Water Framework Directive elements of Barkham Brook and Loddon (Swallowfield to Thames confluence) water bodies are limited in magnitude, due to the limited value of the receptors on site. By following best practice guidance, selecting environmentally sensitive design options, and introducing protection and enhancement measures it is unlikely that 'Good' status will be prevented in the future.
- 9.13.13 In relation to foul water, discussions are ongoing with Thames Water regarding the extent of additional off-site sewers or improvements to existing sewers that will be required to provide sufficient capacity to service the development. The drainage system will be designed to the appropriate standards.
- 9.13.14 Overall, the FRA and Drainage Strategy have demonstrated how the development proposals accord with Section 14 of the NPPF, Policies CC09 and CC10 of the MDD and Policies FD1 and SS13, in relation to flood risk and drainage, of the emerging LPU.

## 9.14 Air Quality

- 9.14.1 Paragraph 187e of the NPPF sets out that new and existing development should be prevented from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of air pollution, alongside other forms of pollution. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air quality.
- 9.14.2 Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development) of the Core Strategy states that development proposals should minimise the emission of pollutants into the wider environment. In addition, development should avoid areas where pollution may impact upon the amenity of future occupiers.
- 9.14.3 Policy HC6 (Air Pollution and Air Quality) of the emerging Local Plan Update sets out that development proposals should maintain, and where possible improve air quality. Development proposals should consider the prevailing air quality and potential impacts upon air quality arising from airborne particulates, dust and odour associated with the construction and operation of a proposal (including vehicular traffic).
- 9.14.4 Chapter 7 of the Environmental Statement accompanying this application relates to the assessment of air quality. The air quality assessment includes:
  - an evaluation of the temporary effects from fugitive construction dust and construction vehicle exhaust emissions;
  - the impacts and effects of the development traffic on the local area;
  - the impacts and effects on future occupants of the development from their exposure;
  - to the prevailing levels of air pollution, which can be a factor in the suitability of the Site for its proposed uses.
- 9.14.5 For the construction phase of the development, the key pollutant is dust from construction activities. For the operational phase (post completion), the main pollutants will be from traffic emitting nitric oxides. The air quality assessment is informed by the results of a diffusion tube survey undertaken at numerous points around the Site and surrounding area. The survey found that the impact on the nearest sensitive receptors, primarily residential properties, to be minimal.
- 9.14.6 The design of the proposed development incorporates a number of inherent design mitigation measures for both the construction and operational phases.

- 9.14.7 The level and distribution of construction dust emissions will vary according to factors such as the type of dust, duration and location of dust-generating activity, weather conditions and the effectiveness of suppression methods. Dust mitigation measures will be contained in a Dust Management Plan which will be part of the CEMP to be secured by condition.
- 9.14.8 Additional mitigation measures to be adopted during the construction phase include a stakeholder communications plan that include engagement with residents, signage displaying the name and contact details of person(s) accountable for air quality and dust issues on the Site boundary and regular Site monitoring to allow targeted cleaning.
- 9.14.9 During the operational phase, the emissions from vehicles are predicted to have a negligible impact both at the interim stage up to 2032 and the at the fully complete phase in 2040.
- 9.14.10 The proposed development is not expected to give rise to any residual significant effects related to dust emissions and air quality during the construction phase. Provided that effective dust suppression and mitigation measures are consistently applied across all relevant construction areas, the likelihood of cumulative dust-related impacts is considered to be low. Consequently, it is anticipated that no significant adverse cumulative effects will occur as a result of the proposed development, and its associated construction works.

## **9.15 Land Contamination and Ground Conditions**

- 9.15.1 Paragraph 196 of the NPPF requires that planning policies and decisions ensure that a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination. This includes risks arising from natural hazards or former activities such as mining, and any proposals for mitigation including land remediation (as well as potential impacts on the natural environment arising from that remediation).
- 9.15.2 Adopted Development Plan Policy CP1 (Sustainable development) includes the requirement to minimise the emission of pollutants into the wider environment.
- 9.15.3 Within the emerging LPU, Policy HC9 (Contaminated land and water) sets out that development proposals on or near sites, which are known, or suspected to be potentially contaminated, or proposals for sensitive land uses, will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the sensitive receptors set out in the policy would not be exposed to levels of potential contamination that would give rise to unacceptable risks or harm to health, or other adverse impacts.
- 9.15.4 The application is accompanied by a Geo-Environmental Desk Study that identifies that there is only location within the Site where a minor potential contamination risk exists. This where a small barn once stood. As this could still have a potential impact on the proposed development, a Phase 2 contamination assessment is therefore recommended to assess the significance of this potential pollutant.
- 9.15.5 Overall, the study confirms that there should be no significant contamination on the site which would preclude any redevelopment and therefore no reason why any subsequent contamination assessment could not be addressed through appropriately worded conditions.

## **9.16 Noise and Vibration**

- 9.16.1 Policy 187(e) of the NPPF sets out that planning decisions should prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of noise pollution.
- 9.16.2 Policy CC06 (Noise) of the adopted MDD requires proposals to demonstrate how they have addressed noise impacts to protect noise sensitive receptors from noise impacts.

- 9.16.3 Within the LPU, Policy HC8 (Noise pollution) also requires proposals to demonstrate how noise impacts have been addressed. Where there is no adverse impact, noise pollution will not be a material consideration. Where there is an adverse impact, then the policy sets out the approaches that must be taken.
- 9.16.4 Chapter 15 of the Environmental Statement submitted with this application relates to Noise and Vibration, and presents the assessment of the likely significant noise and vibration effects resulting from the proposal.
- 9.16.5 Baseline noise surveys were undertaken across the LVGV from February to May 2025, and this included locations close to Mole Road and Oakland Park Nursery. There were no significant sources of vibration impacting the nearest noise-sensitive receptors which require consideration. As such, no vibration survey was deemed necessary.
- 9.16.6 The survey identified 62 Noise Sensitive Receptors (NSR) across the entire LVGV, of which six are particularly relevant to this application and are primary. The results of the survey and subsequent assessment work have been assessed in accordance with standards and guidance and are accompanied with this application. All NSRS are considered to have medium sensitivity to noise.
- 9.16.7 During the construction period, a CEMP will include a number of measures to control noise and vibration emissions as far as practical. These include noise and vibration monitors, fitting silencers to vehicles and equipment, flexible hours of working, reducing drop heights of materials, regular maintenance of equipment and community liaison.
- 9.16.8 The Environmental Statement considers the potential traffic noise given the traffic flow modelling discussed in previous sections. For all locations assessed, including the NSRs, the noise disturbance is assessed as no higher than Negligible with no significant effects.
- 9.16.9 Given the findings of the Environmental Statement, this proposal clearly complies with the requirements of adopted and emerging planning policy.

## **9.17 Socio-Economic Benefits**

- 9.17.1 Sustainable development is achieved by meeting economic, social and environmental objectives. In relation to the economic objective, paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out that this is achieved by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.
- 9.17.2 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF also defines the social objective as being 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; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being. As reflected in the adopted Development Plan and emerging LPU.
- 9.17.3 In particular, Policy ER4 (Employment and skills plans) of the LPU requires proposals to be accompanied by an Employment and Skills Plan to show how the proposal provides opportunities for training, apprenticeships or other vocational initiatives to develop local employability skills required by developers, contractors or end users of the proposal. Policy HC1 (Promoting healthy communities) of the Local Plan Update promotes vibrant, healthy and safe communities. Policy HC2 (Community infrastructure) supports the provision of new community facilities.
- 9.17.4 The proposed development will deliver socio-economic benefits at both the construction and operational phase.

9.17.5 At the construction phase, Chapter 16 of the ES estimates the provision of 61 full time construction jobs over the approximately 8 years building works will be ongoing. Due to the nature of the construction industry and the different stages involved with the construction, not all trades would be required permanently, and some would be on the site for less time than others. The construction process would include a range of occupational levels, including unskilled or labouring jobs to more senior positions, as well as across a range of professional disciplines.

9.17.6 Local businesses would benefit from the trade linkages that would be established to construct the development, meaning that further indirect jobs would be supported locally in suppliers of construction materials and equipment. Local businesses would generally also benefit to some extent from temporary increases in expenditure because of the direct and indirect employment effects of the construction phase.

9.17.7 Once all direct and indirect construction jobs are taken into account, it is estimated that 106 jobs will be created, a beneficial effect of the development.

9.17.8 During the operational phase, the provision of housing will help to improve availability and affordability levels in Wokingham Borough. This is considered to be highly beneficial. The provision of a variety of public open space will have a long term minor beneficial impact.

## 9.18 Health and Wellbeing

9.18.1 The NPPF sets out that sustainable development has three overarching objectives. This includes the social objective to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities. Chapter 8 of the NPPF relates to promoting healthy and safe communities. Paragraph 96 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;*
- b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and*
- c) enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.*

9.18.2 Part of the Vision of the Adopted Core Strategy is to maintain social wellbeing, health and the quality of life although there are no specific policies relating to health and wellbeing.

9.18.3 The LPU includes Chapter 13 on Healthy and Safe Communities. Policy HC1 (Promoting healthy communities) sets out that vibrant, healthy and safe communities will be promoted through a high-quality environment with local services to support health, social and cultural wellbeing and help contribute to reducing deprivation and inequalities in the Borough. The policy requires development proposals to consider impacts on the health and wellbeing of new and existing residents, by including measures that contribute to healthier communities and reduce inequalities. This includes the creation of high quality, active, safe and accessible places.

- 9.18.4 Policy HC1 also sets out that development proposals will be supported where they contribute to health and wellbeing priorities in the Borough and support the provision of new or improved health facilities.
- 9.18.5 A Health Impact Assessment, in accordance with Policy HC1, is provided at Chapter 12 of the ES. This confirms Wokingham Borough has a comparatively older population to the national average, with a higher proportion of males and females aged 40 to 54 years old and a lower proportion of males and females aged 20 to 34 years old. The employment rate in Wokingham has consistently remained above the national average.
- 9.18.6 Male and female life expectancy in Wokingham has been consistently higher than the regional and national averages for the years analysed and has shown a general increase over the years. Mortality rates for all causes, cancer, circulatory disease and respiratory disease are all lower in the unitary authority compared to the regional and national averages.
- 9.18.7 Potential effects during the construction phase on human health could occur from changes in air quality, exposure to noise and changes in transport nature and flow rates. During the operational phase, potential effects could occur from changes in air quality from traffic, noise, and socio economic factors affecting income and employment.
- 9.18.8 Inherent mitigation measures included in the proposed construction phase include a Dust Management Plan (DMP) provided as part of a CEMP. The CEMP would also address hours of working, noise, vibration, dust, light spill, wheel washing and control of runoff. With these mitigation measures in place, the health effects during the construction period are expected to be negligible.
- 9.18.9 During the Operational phase, as discussed in the Air Quality and Noise chapters of the Environmental Statement, it is anticipated that negligible changes in the environment would result in negligible magnitude of impact on human health and wellbeing.
- 9.18.10 The provision of additional housing would result in a minor beneficial effect on human health over the long term.

## 9.19 Waste Management

- 9.19.1 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF relates to sustainable development having three overarching objectives, which need to be pursued mutually in supportive ways. This includes the environmental objective, which relates to waste. Paragraph 8c) states that to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment waste and pollution should be minimised. This should also be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy for Waste (October 2014), which refers to the Government's ambition to work towards a more sustainable and efficient approach to resource use and management by identifying opportunities for improvements through driving waste management up the waste hierarchy.
- 9.19.2 Policy CC04 (Sustainable Design and Construction) within the MDD requires development to seek to deliver high quality sustainably designed and constructed developments. This includes requiring all development to incorporate suitable waste management facilities, including on-site recycling. Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development) of the WBC Core Strategy calls for development proposals to "incorporate facilities for recycling of waste".
- 9.19.3 The Environment Act 2021 provides a legislative framework for environmental protection in the UK, focusing on enhancing air and water quality, biodiversity, and reducing waste. It reinforces waste management policy through measures such as Extended Producer Responsibility, Deposit Return Schemes, mandatory food waste collection, greater consistency in recycling, and stricter enforcement against waste-related crimes. The initiatives are designed to minimise environmental impact, encourage sustainable use of resources, and improve the efficiency and transparency of waste management systems.

9.19.4 This application is accompanied by an Outline Waste Management Strategy, which considers the type and volume of wastes that will be generated through the construction of the proposed development. The report considers the site clearance, construction and operational phases and the estimated volumes of waste.

9.19.5 A Site Waste Management Plan within the Construction Management Plan will set site specific waste management recycling targets. The contractor will be required to recycle all site won materials where possible. Good Site management and careful construction scheduling will minimise the generation of unused materials. A Materials Management Plan will be submitted to and approved by the Environment Agency. Soil management will be included to ensure that soils on the Site are identified and stored for later use or disposal as appropriate.

9.19.6 The Outline Waste Management Strategy includes the likely operational wastes associated with the completed development and sets out what type of waste will be developed, the potential quantity of waste produced and, how the waste will be managed (in regard to reducing, reusing and recycling), with reference to local waste facilities.

9.19.7 It is anticipated that the development will comply with the strategic and local waste requirements contained in policy.

## 9.20 Utilities

9.20.1 It is a requirement of LPU Policy SS13 that development proposals within the LVGV should implement comprehensive utilities strategy. In particular, part 13, requires that:

*"Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive utility and digital infrastructure and communications strategy. This will include the:*

- *Phased delivery of water, foul water, sewerage and electricity upgrades; and*
- *The phased delivery of Fiber to the Premises (FTTP) connectivity, including access to full fibre3 gigabit-capable broadband, and 4G and 5G mobile technologies."*

9.20.2 A Utilities Assessment, prepared by BTS accompanies this application. This identifies constraints and opportunities, associated with utility supply, and reinforcement and diversions, which might be required to facilitate the proposal. The report concludes that the Site can be provided with electricity, potable water and telecoms connections, with sufficient capacity existing for each of these networks.

9.20.3 It will be necessary to divert existing gas mains and private water pipes to facilitate the development. The overhead electricity line, due its size and voltage, will need to remain in place and the Parameter Plans and DAS (at page 74) demonstrate how the proposed layout has been adapted to accommodate this.

9.20.4 There are telecommunication cables within the vicinity of the proposed access and require further investigation to establish whether their diversion is required, which is considered achievable. As such, this proposal will satisfy the relevant requirements of Policy SS13.

## 9.21 Conclusion

9.21.1 The assessments above and in the corresponding ES and technical documents that accompany this application demonstrate that the proposals are acceptable in technical terms. Where impacts associated with the development have been identified, measures have been identified to mitigate these. Additional controls and planning obligations (secured by planning conditions) will enable Wokingham Borough Council, as local planning authority, to ensure the development comes forward in a controlled and co-ordinated manner.

# 10. Housing Statement

## 10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 This is an Outline planning application with all matters except for access Reserved for future consideration. Details of the affordable housing are to be established through discussions and agreement with the Council over the course of the determination of this planning application.

## 10.2 Overall Housing Requirements

10.2.1 The NPPF emphasises that local planning authorities should plan to boost significantly the supply of housing. It requires an evidence-based approach to identifying and meeting the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with policies in the NPPF.

10.2.2 This application is submitted in response to the spatial strategy contained within the LPU. Table 1 of the LPU confirming that the housing need for the Plan period is 12,763 dwellings, an annual requirement of 751 dwellings per year. Without the new allocations in the Plan, the Council would face a shortfall of 4,439 dwellings.

10.2.3 The Plan confirms that, "*given the nature of the borough and the level of future need, it is necessary to allocate greenfield land for development.*" The majority of the shortfall will be addressed through the allocation of three new SDLs, of which the LVGV is one.

10.2.4 Para 4.31 of the Plan states, "*Loddon Valley Garden Village has capacity for around 3,930 new homes of which 2,700 would be built within the plan period.*" Annex F of the LPU contains a proposed delivery trajectory that confirms that the strategy expects the LVGV allocation to start delivering from 2028/29 and for that delivery to ramp up through the remainder of the Plan period to around 250 units a year. Gleeson will work with WBC in respect of a delivery trajectory from the proposed development.

## 10.3 Affordable Housing

10.3.1 The NPPF confirms that the provision of housing and affordable housing is a vitally important material consideration in the determination of planning applications as assisting with meeting present and future housing and affordable housing needs (whilst having regard to the other objectives of national guidance) is necessary to fulfil the social objective of sustainable development.

10.3.2 The approach to affordable housing in the Core Strategy is provided by Policy CP5, which seeks 40% affordable provision on sites outside of the defined development locations. The LPU, at Policy H3 outlines the approach to the provision of affordable housing, stating:

*"All residential development proposals for at least 5 units of accommodation (gross) or 5 bedspaces (gross) or covering a site area of at least 0.16 ha, will provide affordable housing or affordable bedspaces, where viable."*

10.3.3 Under Policy H3, the proportion of affordable housing expected is location dependent, varying from between 30% and 40%. The specific LVGV requirement as stated in Policy SS13 is 40%. Part 2 of Policy H3 states that, "*The expectation is that all development proposals for housing will be able to meet the above policy requirement. In exceptional circumstances applicants may submit an independently produced, open book viability assessment to justify any relaxation of the requirement.*

*Any relaxation will require compelling reasons.*" Affordable housing is expected to be provided on site unless exceptional circumstances indicate provision elsewhere.

- 10.3.4 The Council's most recent Local Housing Need Assessment 2023 ("LHNA") published in November 2023 indicates an overall affordable housing need to rent and buy of 6,689 households over the 19 year period between 2021 to 22040 (52 households per annum).
- 10.3.5 The Affordable Housing Topic Paper (September 2024) forms a crucial part of the evidence base underpinning the LPU and it makes it clear that the LVGV will be a crucial component of the planned supply of affordable housing. The document states at paragraph 6.4 that, "*...within the plan period, Loddon Valley Garden Village is anticipated to deliver 1,080 affordable homes, and 1,572 affordable homes in total.*"
- 10.3.6 This application will deliver a total of 40% of the proposed new dwellings as affordable housing in accordance with adopted and emerging Local Plan policy, up to 172 units, having regard to the emphasis within National Planning Policy and Guidance on meeting the affordable housing need of all eligible households.
- 10.3.7 Rented and Shared Ownership affordable dwellings will be managed by Registered Provider(s); i.e., organisations that have been accredited for such purposes by Homes England. At this early stage specific Registered Providers have not been identified, however this will progress in a phased manner as Reserved Matters applications come forward, consistent with a Section 106 agreement for this Outline application.

## 10.4 Housing Tenure

- 10.4.1 The NPPF (paragraph 63) states that planning policies should reflect the size, type and tenure of homes needed by different groups in the community.
- 10.4.2 Policy CP5 in the Core Strategy does not specify a tenure split target but seeks that the 'type' of affordable housing provided meets the proven needs of households in need of affordable housing. The supporting text to this policy indicates a 70% rent / 30% Affordable Home Ownership (AHO) tenure split should be a "starting point" for negotiations. This split remains the general preference in the supporting text for LPU Policy H3.
- 10.4.3 Of the overall housing need listed above 5,159 household need AHO homes as they are unable to buy on the open market. 1,529 households need affordable rent homes. This suggests a necessary tenure split of 23% rent/ 77% AHO tenure split is needed.
- 10.4.4 The LHNA acknowledges that a wider range of AHO needs can be met where a range of AHO products are made available.
- 10.4.5 Given the difference in tenure split between the current and emerging Local policy position and the evidence of need contained in the LHNA, the precise tenure proposed in this application will be established through negotiation with WBC.

## 10.5 Housing Mix

- 10.5.1 The Core Strategy does not prescribe a target housing mix but seeks a range of dwelling types and sizes on larger developments to reflect changing needs and demographics in the Borough. The MDD includes Policy TB05 'Housing Mix' that seeks a mix of housing which reflects a balance between the underlying character of the area and both the current and projected needs of households. It also sets out that affordable housing should be provided in an 'appropriate mix' to be established on a site by site basis and reflecting the Housing Strategy and Affordable Housing SPD (2010).

10.5.2 The more recent Wokingham Borough Council Affordable Housing Strategy 2024-2028 (published in April 2024) does not include any affordable housing mix preferences.

10.5.3 Emerging Policies H1 and H3 of the LPU do not specify an affordable housing mix but expect a proposal to reflect and respond to the identified housing needs and demands as set out in the council's most up to date evidence of housing need. The supporting text to Policy H1 replicates the indicative housing mix from the LHNA as currently the most up to date evidence, which proposes the following:

**Table 10.1: LHNA Indicative Housing Mix**

Number of Bedrooms	Affordable Housing	Total Market Housing
1-bed	17%	5%
2-bed	38%	13%
3-bed	33%	47%
4+ bed	12%	36%

10.5.4 Although the application is made in Outline, with layout and scale as Reserved Matters, Gleeson propose that the indicative market housing mix will meet that proposed by the LHNA.

10.5.5 The Affordable Housing Statement accompanying this application uses the latest Housing Waiting List and Help to Buy data published by Government, the Arborfield and Barkham Housing Needs Analysis 2019 and Wokingham Help to Buy data to offer a potential affordable housing mix for this proposal, as follows:

**Table 10.2: Potential Affordable Housing Mix for the Proposed Development as set out in accompanying Affordable Housing Statement by Pioneer Property Services Ltd**

Number of Bedrooms	Rent	Home Ownership
1-bed	15%	0%
2-bed	44%	70%
3-bed	35%	30%
4+ bed	6%	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

10.5.6 Having regard to the mix of affordable homes for rent and sale suggested to be needed by the LHNA and in the context of local level housing waiting list data for rented and AHO homes providing around 60% of rented homes as one and two bedroom apartments and houses and the majority of the remaining 40% as three bedroom houses would be appropriate

10.5.7 The above potential mix is for further consideration and discussion with the Council including in respect of the split of houses and flats, but it is proposed that the Site will provide a mix of sizes and types of affordable homes with the final mix proportions being the subject of negotiation with the Council in accordance with adopted policy.

## 10.6 Accessible Housing

- 10.6.1 There is no currently adopted policy in either the Core Strategy or MDD that provides a requirement for accessible housing. Criterion 4 of LPU Policy H1 however requires residential development proposals to be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations, unless it is built in line with M4(3). Accordingly, Criterion 5 of Policy H1 requires Development proposals for 20 or more new-build dwellings to deliver at least 5% of the new housing as wheelchair accessible and adaptable in line with M4(3) of the Building Regulations.
- 10.6.2 Gleeson is comfortable that the Affordable Housing will comply with these Accessibility requirements and this can be secured by condition or within the Section 106 agreement as required. Compliance with the Accessibility requirements for market housing will then be for the subsequent Reserved Matters applications to demonstrate for each phase of the development.

## 10.7 Space Standards

- 10.7.1 Policy TB07 of the MDD provides internal space standards that pre-date the introduction of the Nationally Described Space Standards (“NDSS”). The NPPG states that: *“Where a local planning authority (or qualifying body) wishes to require an internal space standard, they should only do so by reference in their Local Plan to the nationally described space standard.”* Some of the internal space standards in Policy TB07 fall below NDSS and some are higher. As such, the Council does not currently have an updated adopted NDSS position.
- 10.7.2 Consequently, criterion 8 of LPU Policy H1 requires all residential proposals to comply with the NDSS. The Affordable Housing will comply with the NDSS, and this can be secured by condition or within the Section 106 agreement as required. Compliance with the NDSS for market housing will be for the subsequent Reserved Matters applications to demonstrate for each phase of the development.

# 11. Planning conditions and obligations

## 11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 Loddon Valley Garden Village is the largest allocation in the emerging Local Plan Update, and one of the largest developments ever brought forward within Wokingham Borough. As such it is recognised that the development must be supported by the delivery of comprehensive, appropriate and well-timed infrastructure, both new and enhanced; and that development must be carefully managed through the careful use of planning conditions.

## 11.2 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

11.2.1 The Wokingham Borough Council Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule was adopted on 19 February 2015 and came into effect on 6 April 2015. The Charging Schedule sets out site specific CIL rates for the Core Strategy SLD's (ranging from £300-£365/m<sup>2</sup> index linked) and for the 'Rest of Borough' (£365/m<sup>2</sup>).

11.2.2 At the time of writing, the Site is located within the 'Rest of Borough' area for CIL purposes. However, following discussions with the Council, it is anticipated that the Charging Schedule will be updated alongside the LPU, in order to give this application a nil (or nominal) rate. Infrastructure is therefore expected to be secured by via S106 Planning Agreement consistent with an agreed overarching Infrastructure Delivery Plan for LVGV as a whole.

## 11.3 Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and Section 106 Heads of Terms

11.3.1 A wide range of infrastructure is necessary to support Loddon Valley Garden Village as a whole, including complex engineering works, community and educational facilities, transport measures, public open space, SANG, and ecological enhancement. Hence, highly detailed engagement has taken place with WBC through the pre-application stage, culminating in a detailed, costed IDP which relates to each of the applications submitted pursuant to LPU policy SS13.

11.3.2 This IDP has been produced by the landowners and its consultancy team, led by RLB, and has been the subject of detailed engagement at the pre-application stage. The IDP will be developed further as this application progresses, and subject to wider consultation, before being formalised upon determination through the Section 106 agreement.

11.3.3 It is anticipated that the S106 Agreement is likely to address the following key matters:

**Table 11.1: Overview of anticipated planning obligations (preliminary Heads of Terms)**

Topic/ theme	Anticipated S.106 requirement
Housing	

Topic/ theme	Anticipated S.106 requirement
Affordable housing – quantum	To ensure provision of 40% affordable housing on the Site in accordance with policy.
Affordable housing – tenure and unit type	To determine an appropriate tenure mix, including in terms of Affordable Rent, Social Rent, and Affordable Home Ownership units.
Affordable housing – distribution	To address how and when affordable housing will be delivered across the application site as a whole, to ensure an appropriate mix and balance across different parcels coming forward at different times.
Affordable housing – delivery, management and detailed matters	We would expect the Section 106 agreement to encompass further matters such as the transfer to registered providers, estate management, 'staircasing', and viability.
<b>Social and community infrastructure</b>	
Financial contributions	Securing proportionate contributions towards key social and community facilities delivered within the LVGV as a whole, including schooling, sports facilities, and community centres.
<b>SANG mitigation and ecology</b>	
SANG – design and definition	Formally securing relevant quantum of SANG made necessary through this application, through provision within the wider LVGV boundary
<b>Public open space</b>	
Definitions	Mechanism to formally require delivery of the various forms of public open space formally applied for in the development, with a means by which each typology is defined / approved.
Delivery and timing	Obligation to devise a programme to provide a suitable quantum of open space typologies, in suitable locations, as the development of the Site progresses. The focus of this being, to ensure that a sufficient and appropriate amount of public open space is available to residents at each phase.
Management and maintenance	Financial contributions towards management and maintenance.
<b>Highways, transport and engineering</b>	
Financial contributions to off-site highway improvement works	Formal definition of relevant works emerging from the Transport Assessment, relating to a defined cost and mechanism for payment thereof.
Adoption of public footpaths and roads	Protocols relating to formal adoption by the Highway Authority, having regard to the overall masterplan, strategic design code, and build /phasing programme.

Topic/ theme	Anticipated S.106 requirement
Rights of way	Definition of the location and status of each public right of way affected by, or created as a result of, the development, and measures to ensure effective delivery of a rights of way strategy consistent with the overall programme of development
Sustainable transport measures	Definitions of, and mechanisms for the delivery of, all relevant measures including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My Journey Contribution</li> <li>• Provision of new / improved footpaths and cycleways</li> <li>• Residential Travel Plan</li> <li>• Travel Plan Coordinator</li> <li>• Contributions towards bus services</li> </ul>
Drainage	Detailed design, provision and management of SuDS systems and associated infrastructure through the development.
Utilities	Obligations associated with ensuring capacity for required infrastructure, such as water, waste, electricity, mobile network, and broadband.
Waste	Obligations associated with the minimisation, collection, and disposal of waste within the development.
<b>Employment Skills and Construction</b>	
General	Employment, training and apprenticeship opportunities
	Measures to identify opportunities to source goods and services from local suppliers
<b>Management of public areas</b>	
General	Financial contributions towards management and maintenance
Public Art	Protocols for the delivery of appropriate public art through the development, having regard to the Strategic Design Code.
<b>Monitoring and viability</b>	
General matters	Mechanisms and fees for S106 monitoring
	Mechanisms for and timing of post-permission viability review

11.3.4 Discussions with the Council will continue during the application determination period in order that the Heads of Terms are agreed and a draft S106 Agreement has been prepared by the time that the application is reported to the Council's Planning Committee.

## 11.4 Planning Conditions

11.4.1 The planning application is submitted in Outline, with all matters apart from Access reserved for later consideration. It is anticipated therefore that a range of planning conditions will need to be agreed in response to consultee recommendations and in relation to the following key matters:

**Table 11.2: Anticipated planning conditions**

Topic/ theme	Anticipated planning condition requirement
<b>Overall process and documentation</b>	
Timescales	To submit the first application for Reserved Matters within 3 years of permission
Timescales	To commence development under any Reserved Matters application within 2 years of the date of approval of those matters

Topic/ theme	Anticipated planning condition requirement
Approval of Parameter Plans	To carry out development in accordance with the 'parameter' plans
Approval of highway plans	To carry out development substantially in accordance with the suite of highway drawings included with this application
<b>Site-wide strategies for design and built form</b>	
Strategic Design Code	Requirement for Reserved Matters application to accord with the Strategic Design Code, which is expected to have been completed by the point this outline application is determined.
Site-wide housing strategy	Requirement for the submission of a site-wide housing strategy to demonstrate how residential development will provide the delivery (quantum of and phasing) of market, affordable, custom-build and other types through the lifetime of the development. To consider internal space standards having regard to the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS)
Crime Prevention	Submission and agreement of a site-wide Crime Prevention Strategy to clarify a common approach to 'designing out crime' through the detailed design process.
Public Art	Requirement for the submission and agreement of a site-wide public art strategy as part of, or at least prior to the approval of the first Reserved Matters application.
<b>Landscape, Environment and Ecology</b>	
Tree and hedgerow protection	Adherence to the proposals in relation to tree retention and protection, as set out in the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment
Landscape, Ecology and Green Infrastructure	Provision of landscape and public open space substantially in accordance with the details submitted, including planting plans for the Spine Road, Attenuation Basins, and elsewhere.
Landscape and Ecological Management Plan	Requirement to adhere to principles of the submitted Landscape Management Plan and Landscape Design Strategy document, and how these will be supplemented with more detail for approval by WBC prior to commencement.
Ecology	Requirement to adhere to measures set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain assessment.
Lighting	Requirement for the submission of detailed lighting strategies in association with Reserved Matters stage, consistent with the Strategic Design Code.
<b>Heritage</b>	
Archaeology	Adherence to the principles and mitigation set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment, setting out (as applicable) any further approvals required in relation to further field work or protocols to follow during the construction process.

Topic/ theme	Anticipated planning condition requirement
<b>Construction, waste and servicing</b>	
Construction Environmental Management Plan	Requirement for a phase-specific CEMP to be submitted to and approved in writing by WBC prior to commencement. To include factor such as soil movement, traffic management, lighting, loading, storage, working methods, pollution prevention (dust), and protection of trees/hedgerows and other sensitive features.
Waste Strategy	Submission of site-wide Waste Strategy to ensure the minimisation and sustainable handling of waste arising through the development process across the Site.
<b>Transport and access</b>	
Pedestrian and Cycle Strategy	Requirement for the submission and approval of a pedestrian and cycle strategy based on the Outline parameters and which will be progressively delivered in parallel with the completion of individual parcels of the Site. The objective of the strategy will be to ensure new pedestrian and cycle infrastructure is proactively and comprehensively delivered.
Site Access Arrangements	Any relevant controls over the physical implementation of approved accesses to the Site by vehicles, cycles and pedestrians.
Parking Strategy	Requirement for the submission and approval of a parking strategy, to ensure a comprehensive and effective overall approach to the Site.
<b>Sustainability and energy</b>	
Electric vehicle Charging	To require the submission and approval of an overall site-wide Electric Vehicle (EV) charging strategy, to be supplemented with more information and detail at the Reserved Matters stage
Low and Zero Carbon Technologies	Requirements to adhere to low-carbon principles through the Reserved Matters stage, consistent with Local Plan policy and the sustainability statement included with this application.

11.4.2 Discussions with the Council in relation to the nature and scope of planning conditions will be progressed in order that a draft decision notice can be completed by the time that the application is reported to the Planning Committee.

# 12. Planning Balance and benefits of the development

## 12.1 Development Plan and material considerations

12.1.1 As Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 confirms, planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

12.1.2 The Site does not feature in the extant Development Plan, comprising the Core Strategy and the MDD; and the LPU, which allocates the Site, has not yet been adopted. Hence until the adoption of the LPU, approval would entail a technical departure from the Development Plan. However, material considerations overwhelmingly indicate that this application should be granted, which can be summarised under three broad headings:

- (i) Due to relevant Development Plan policies being 'out of date', the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' applies pursuant to NPPF 11d.
- (ii) There is an array of positive social, economic and environmental benefits that would accrue as a result of this application that are overwhelmingly in the public interest.
- (iii) This application is fully consistent with emerging LPU Policy SS13, which itself should be afforded substantial weight.

## 12.2 The presumption in favour of sustainable development

12.2.1 As noted above in Sections 7 and 8 above, WBC are unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing supply, and hence relevant policies in the Local Plan are 'out of date'. This means that based on the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' set out in paragraph 11d of the NPPF, permission should be granted, 'unless':

- "(i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- (ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination."

12.2.2 Neither of the above exceptions apply. This application lies largely outside of 'footnote 7' designations, and insofar as there is a relationship with habitats, heritage assets, and flood risk areas within the development, the application will produce overall positive benefits. Hence there is no reason, let alone a strong one, to refuse the development.

## 12.3 Positive benefits of the development

12.3.1 As evidenced throughout this application, and as summarised in this Planning Statement, the Design and Access Statement, and the Environmental Statement, the benefits of this application (social,

economic and environmental) are considered to outweigh any harms. These are summarised in the table below.

**Table 12.1: Summary of benefits and weight**

Benefit	Planning weight
<b>Social benefits</b>	
Construction of up to 430 homes in a highly sustainable location, selected by WBC for inclusion in the emerging Local Plan. This, in a context where the council are able to show a housing supply of only 1.7 years, and where the Development Plan is 'out of date'.	<b>Very Substantial</b>
Provision of 40% affordable homes, in line with emerging LPU policy, with a mix suitable to the context of the site and housing needs in the area.	<b>Very Substantial</b>
Provision of substantial public open space of a variety of typologies, contributing to high quality of life for future residents.	<b>Substantial</b>
<b>Economic benefits</b>	
Contributing to the success of the Thames Valley Science Park (TVSP) through providing residential accommodation – both affordable and market – in close proximity, thus supporting the existing and future workforce.	<b>Very Substantial</b>
Economic benefits to the area relating to the construction process and additional spending in the local area by new residents after the Proposed Development is completed.	<b>Significant</b>
<b>Environmental benefits</b>	
Delivery of at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain within the Site	<b>Very Substantial</b>
Provision of homes on a low-carbon basis, with comprehensive sustainable energy measures	<b>Significant</b>
Provision of a network of new pedestrian and cycle paths to facilitate sustainable transport and recreation	<b>Moderate</b>

## 12.4 Consistency with, and weight of LPU policy

12.4.1 Given the above, there is strong justification for the application irrespective of its position outside of the adopted Development Plan. However, what sets this application apart is its consistency with the emerging LPU and particularly LPU Policy SS13, to which significant weight should be afforded in decision-making.

12.4.2 Following a 5-year programme of exhaustive Site selection and analysis work led by WBC in connection with the LPU, the LVGV has emerged as the optimal location within the Borough for delivery of a sustainable new settlement to meet social, economic and environmental objectives over the next 20 years and beyond.

12.4.3 Hence this application has the full backing of an emerging Development Plan allocation (Policy SS13) which is at an advanced stage and provides a direct basis for all elements that it contains to

be assessed against. The LPU was submitted for Examination in February 2025 and Part 1 Hearings will commence on 18 November and as such, the LVGV has been deemed by the planning authority – wholly independently of the applicant – as a sustainable location for development. Although the LPU has not yet been adopted and may be the subject of some modification and refinement through the Examination process, both the urgent need for housing and the inherent suitability of this Site remains.

- 12.4.4 Other than through planning applications such as this one coming forward at an early stage in the Plan Period, there is no realistic means of delivering the key objectives of the LPU, particularly the quantum of housing required. It is particularly vital that larger, more complex schemes such as this come forward through the planning application process promptly, in order to facilitate timely delivery of housing and ensure that the array of other social, economic and environmental benefits can be achieved without undue delay.
- 12.4.5 Consistent with NPPF paragraph 49, substantial weight can be afforded to emerging LPU Policy SS13 on the basis of its advanced stage of preparation, the limited range of unresolved objections, and the consistency of the plan with the Framework in providing for sustainable housing, and other benefits.
- 12.4.6 This application is therefore not premature; indeed, it is wholly appropriate for WBC to determine this application favourably.

## 13. Conclusions

- 13.1.1 Gleeson's ambition is for this development to contribute positively towards delivery of LVGV as a fully integrated and sustainable new community, under the aims of LPU Policy SS13. As well as providing over 10% of the total planned housing within the LVGV, which is pivotal to the achievement of the LPU spatial strategy, Gleeson's application will deliver one of the primary access routes key to the allocation as a whole, facilitating and encouraging movement by bus, cycle, and for pedestrians, as well as for vehicles.
- 13.1.2 As described throughout this Planning Statement, supported by the Design and Access Statement, Environmental Statement and other reports, this application is a highly appropriate and deliverable proposal.
- 13.1.3 The approval of this application, which relates to land identified as a draft allocation within the emerging LPU, represents a timely and strategically sound response to both local and national planning imperatives. Its inclusion in the LPU reflects its suitability, and its potential to support the long-term spatial strategy of WBC.
- 13.1.4 This application is fully aligned with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly its emphasis on plan-led, sustainable development that meets the needs of current and future generations. It will significantly boost the supply of homes, create well-designed and beautiful places, support sustainable modes of transport, enhance biodiversity, and ensure climate resilience. It will contribute positively to the five-year housing land supply based on a robust delivery trajectory supported by evidence of infrastructure viability and market demand.
- 13.1.5 The proposals directly tackles the housing crisis and contributes to the government's commitment to deliver 1.5 million homes in the current parliament, with 40% affordable housing.
- 13.1.6 In accordance with S.38(6) of the Planning and Compulsorily Purchase Act, there are therefore clear grounds for Wokingham Borough Council to support this application, and we therefore respectfully request that this planning application is approved at the earliest opportunity.

# Appendix 1 – Copy of LPU Policy SS13

5.107 Further guidance to Policy SS12 is set out in Appendix B. This is supplementary to the original South Wokingham SDL Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD sets out principles to ensure high quality development with a distinctive character and will remain in its current form. Further guidance may be prepared in due course to ensure the additional development continues to reflect the key principles and concept.

5.108 A defined settlement area has 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.

### **Policy SS13: Loddon Valley 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 m<sup>2</sup> 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 2,500m<sup>2</sup>), 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:
  - i. The phased delivery of active travel and public transport measures;
  - ii. 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
  - iii. 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,

Mereoak 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.

Utilities

13. Development proposals should devise and implement a comprehensive utility and digital infrastructure and communications strategy. This will include the:

- a) The phased delivery of water, foul water, sewerage and electricity upgrades; and
- b) The phased delivery of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) connectivity, including access to full-fibre gigabit-capable broadband; and 4G and 5G mobile technologies.

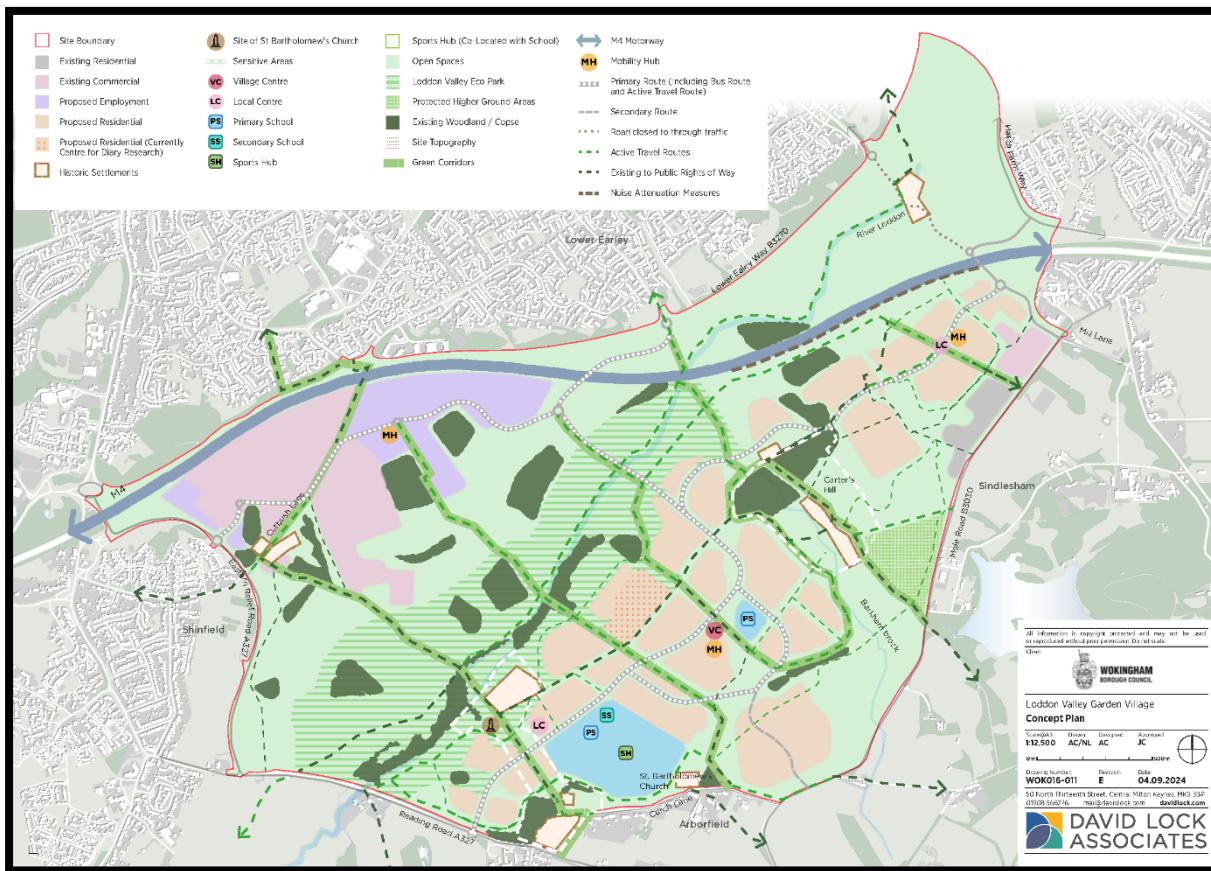
Minerals and waste

14. The potential for on-site minerals resources which may be winnable through prior extraction should be informed by minerals resource assessments. Where viable, development proposals should respond and implement a strategy for prior extraction.

Stewardship

15. Development proposals should proceed in accordance with an agreed strategy for the long-term governance and stewardship arrangements for community assets, including country park, open spaces, public realm areas and community and other relevant facilities.

**Figure 8: Loddon Valley Garden Village concept plan.**



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 Communities<sup>8</sup>, 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.

<sup>8</sup> Town and Country Planning Association (2017) Garden Villages Guidance; Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018) Prospectus on 'Garden Communities'

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.

**Policy SS14: Sites allocated for residential, including residential as part of mixed-use development**

1. The sites listed below and shown on the Policies Map, are allocated for residential development (including residential as part of mixed-use development).
2. Development proposals should consider the site specific development guidelines, as set out in Appendix E.

In considering the site specific development guidelines flexibility may be applied to allow for material changes in circumstance as a result of the passage of time or to enable alternative solutions that will deliver the same, or preferably, a better planning outcome.

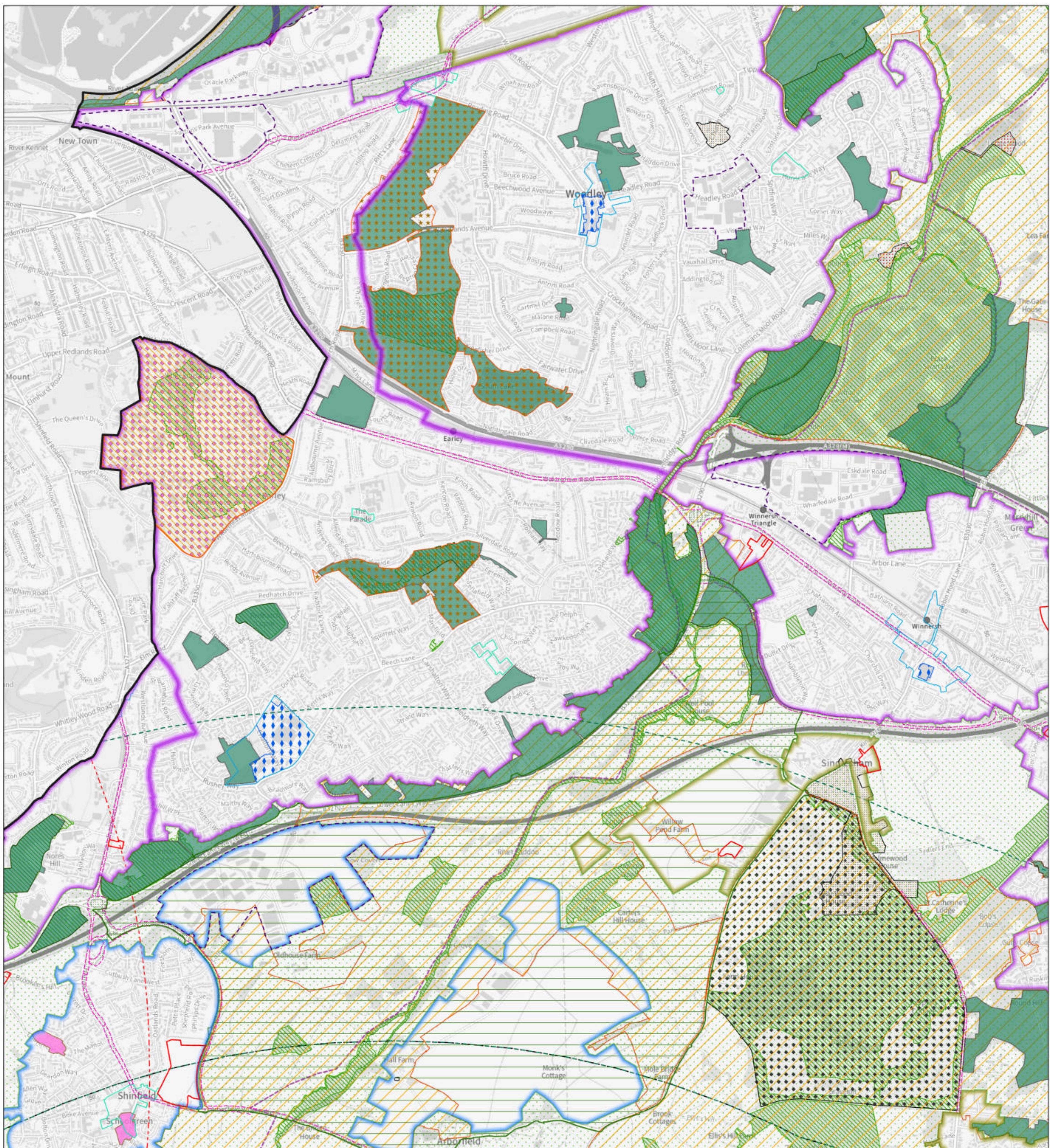
3. Development proposals are expected to come forward through a design led approach, involving the local community. For the larger sites, and where outlined in the development guidelines, it will be necessary for a masterplan and a strategic design code to be prepared.

Ref	Site name	Approx No. wellings	Permission / resolution to grant <sup>9</sup>
SS14.1	High Barn Farm, Commonfield Lane, Barkham*	20	-
SS14.2	Honeysuckle Lodge, Commonfield Lane, Barkham*	4	-
SS14.3	Woodlands Farm, Wood Lane, Barkham*	15	-
SS14.4	Land west of Park Lane, Charvil	61	-
SS14.5	24 Barkham Ride, Finchampstead	30	-
SS14.6	31-33 Barkham Ride, Finchampstead	80	Yes
SS14.7	Greenacres Farm, Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead	100	-

<sup>9</sup> At September 2024.

## Appendix 2 – Extract from the LPU Policies Map

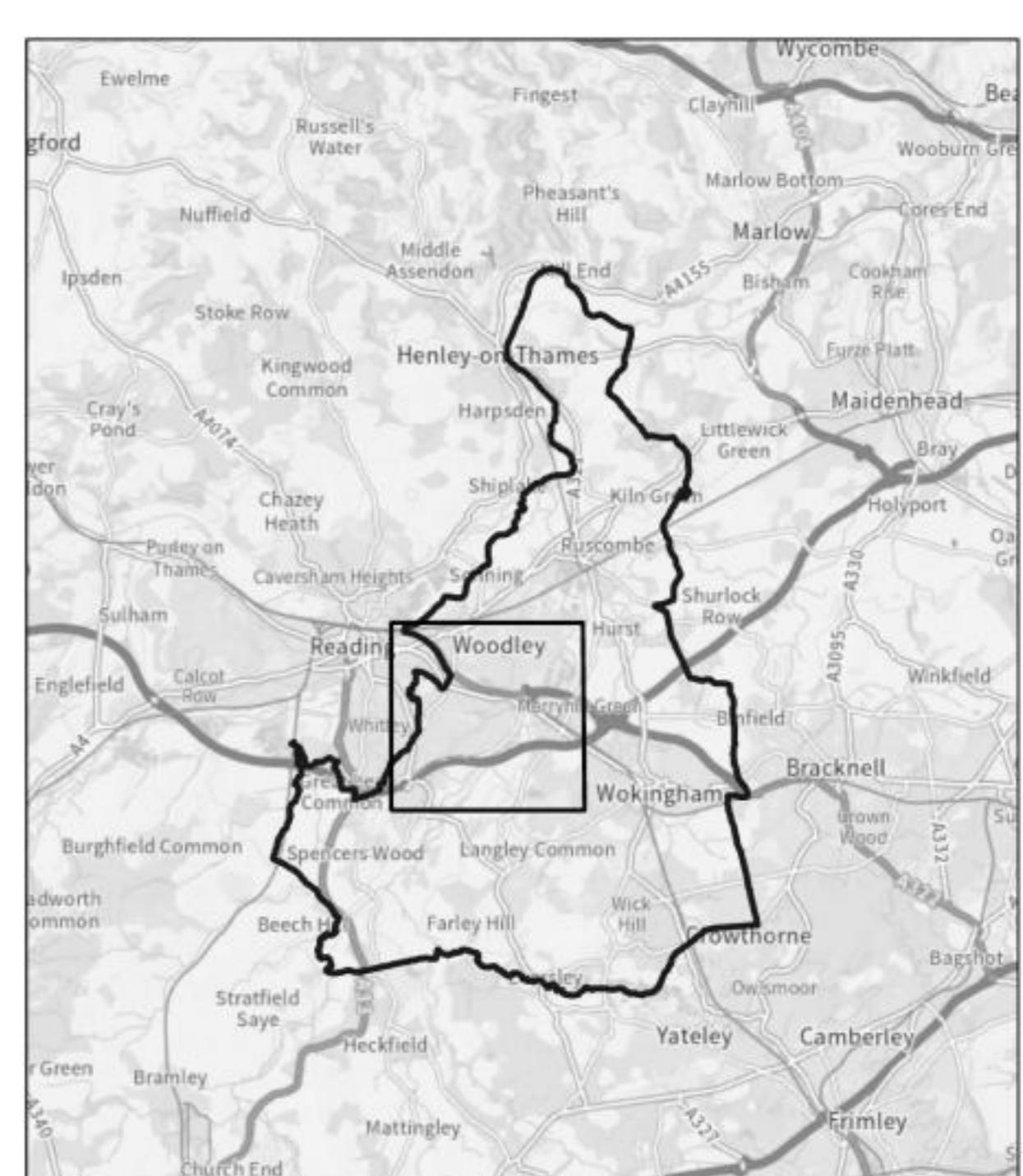
# Map C1 Local Plan Update Proposed Submission Plan Policies Map



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 2.5 3 Kilometers  
1:12,500



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**



# Appendix 3 – Abbreviations

## Site Specific Abbreviations

- LVGV – Loddon Valley Garden Village
- TVSP – Thames Valley Science Park
- SS13 – Site allocation policy in the LPU for LVGV

## General Planning & Policy Abbreviations

- CIL – Community Infrastructure Levy
- DAS – Design and Access Statement
- DPD – Development Plan Document
- HELAA – Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment
- IDP – Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- LHNA - Local Housing Need Assessment
- LPU – Local Plan Update
- MDD – Managing Development Delivery Document
- NDG – National Design Guide
- NDSS - Nationally Described Space Standards
- NMDC – National Model Design Code
- NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework
- PPG – Planning Practice Guidance
- Reg 18 / Reg 19 – Regulation 18/19 (Local Plan consultation stages)
- S106 – Section 106 Agreement
- SDC – Strategic Design Code
- SDL – Strategic Development Location
- SPD – Supplementary Planning Document
- SPG – Supplementary Planning Guidance

## Environmental & Technical Abbreviations

- AIA – Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- ALC – Agricultural Land Classification
- BMV / BVA – Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land
- BNG – Biodiversity Net Gain
- CEMP – Construction Environmental Management Plan
- DEPZ – Detailed Emergency Planning Zone
- EIA – Environmental Impact Assessment
- ES – Environmental Statement
- EV – Electric Vehicle
- FTTP – Fibre to the Premises
- HGV – Heavy Goods Vehicle
- LVIA – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- LWS – Local Wildlife Site
- MRA – Mineral Resource Assessment

- MSA – Mineral Safeguarding Area
- SAMM - Strategic Access Management & Monitoring
- SANG – Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace
- 
- SCE – Statement of Community Engagement
- SPA – Special Protection Area
- SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest
- SuDS – Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
- WFD - Water Framework Directive

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