

Affordable Housing Statement

In respect of:

**Loddon Garden
Village, Hall Farm, East
of Shinfield**

Prepared by:

Pioneer Property Services Ltd

On behalf of:

University of Reading

Date:

28th July 2025



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Loddon Valley Garden Village (“LVGV”) in Wokingham Borough is proposed as a Strategic Development Location (“SDL”) within Policy SS13 of the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040: Proposed Submission Plan (“LPU”). Development ‘principles’ in LPU Policy SS13 set out that the LVGV SDL will deliver ‘around 3,930 dwellings’ and 40% affordable housing ‘in accordance with Policy H3’.
- 1.2 This Affordable Housing Statement (“AHS”) has been prepared on behalf of the University of Reading (“the applicant”) in support of the proposed development of Loddon Garden Village (“LGV”) to provide up to 2,800 new homes (the “application site”) within the LVGV SDL and sets out the affordable housing proposals for the application site having regard to relevant planning policy and supporting evidence.
- 1.3 The application description is as follows:

“Application for the phased development of a new community at Loddon Garden Village, comprising, in outline:

- *up to 2,800 residential units to include up to 100 custom and self-build plots;*
- *primary schools (up to 3 forms of entry) to include early years provision and 1 secondary school (up to 12 forms of entry);*
- *one District Centre, to incorporate up to 11,000m² of Class E (Commercial, Business and Service, to include a including food store of around 2,500m²), and Class F (Local Community and Learning);*
- *one Local Centre; to incorporate up to 2,400m² of Class E;*
- *a Sports Hub to include sports pitches and pavilion space;*
- *up to 4,250m² of further Class E and Class F development to include commercial, health care and public house (sui generis);*
- *comprehensive green infrastructure including a Country Park, landscaping and public open space, and ecological enhancement measures;*
- *20 gypsy and traveller pitches;*

- *comprehensive drainage and flood alleviation measures to include Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and engineering measures within Loddon Valley for the River Loddon;*
- *internal road network including spine road with pedestrian and cycle connections and associated supporting infrastructure;*
- *new and modified public rights of way;*
- *associated utilities, infrastructure, and engineering works, including the undergrounding of overhead lines;*
- *Ground reprofiling to accommodate infrastructure, flood alleviation and development parcels;*
- *Up to 0.5ha of land adjoining St Bartholomew's church for use as cemetery;*
- *Electricity substation (up to 1.5ha)*

All matters reserved other than access, incorporating:

- *a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to Lower Earley Way via a new 4th arm to the Meldreth Way roundabout;*
- *a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular bridge over the M4;*
- *a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular bridge over the River Loddon;*
- *a new vehicular access to the A327 Reading Road, via a new arm to the Observer Way roundabout;*
- *a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to Thames Valley Science Park;*
- *an initial phase of internal roads with associated drainage, landscape and engineering works and ground reprofiling, between the A327 and the south eastern boundary of the site.*

Application includes full permission for the change of use of 40.4 hectares of agricultural land to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), 18.35 hectares of SANG link, and provision of Biodiversity Net Gain measures, the demolition and clearance of 20,809 m2 of buildings and structures at the Centre for Dairy Research (CEDAR) and at Hall Farm,

the demolition of 3 existing dwellings on Carter's Hill Lane, and the retention of specified buildings at Hall Farm."

- 1.4 It is proposed that the application site will provide 40% affordable housing in accordance with Policy H3 – the application site proposals will enable the delivery of a significant amount of infrastructure and market and affordable housing.
- 1.5 The following section of this Statement sets out the affordable housing proposals for the application site and demonstrates how these accord with national and local planning policy and reflect the underpinning local housing needs evidence. Section 3 draws conclusions.

2 Affordable Housing Proposals

2.1 Quantum

National Planning Policy and Guidance

- 2.1.1 The provision of housing and affordable housing as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications remains of vital importance within the current National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF” – December 2024 - as amended in February 2025) and accompanying online National Planning Practice Guidance (initially published in March 2014, updated from time to time and partially updated in December 2024 (“NPPG”).
- 2.1.2 The NPPF confirms that¹ 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.
- 2.1.3 The presumption in favour of sustainable development for decision taking states that where development plan policies are out of date, when weighing any adverse impacts of granting permission against a proposals benefits the decision taker should have ‘particular regard to key policies’ within the NPPF, including in respect of ‘providing affordable homes’.²
- 2.1.4 Paragraph 61 of the NPPF confirms that it remains an objective of national policy to significantly boost housing supply. The needs of different groups in the community ‘should be assessed and reflected in planning policies’ and these groups include those who require affordable housing.³
- 2.1.5 The NPPG confirms that ‘all households whose needs are not met by the market can be considered in affordable housing need’⁴ and that the gross need for affordable housing should include ‘households from other tenures in need and those that cannot afford their own homes, either to rent, or to own, where that is their aspiration’.⁵
- 2.1.6 The standard method continues to be the assessment by which local authorities should assess the ‘minimum’ local housing need for housing overall. The Standard Method calculation process has been revised and, whilst the LPU is being examined under the pre-December 2024 Standard Method via transitional arrangements, a February 2025 Planning

¹ NPPF, paragraph 8b, page 5

² NPPF, paragraph 11 ‘c’ and ‘d’, page 6

³ NPPF, paragraphs 61 and 63, page 17

⁴ NPPG, Housing and Economic Needs Assessment, Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 2a-018-20190220

⁵ NPPG, Housing Needs of Different Groups, Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 67-006-20190722

Appeal Inspector's report refers to the Council being able to demonstrate a housing land supply of only 1.81 years against the December 2024 NPPF Standard Method.⁶ This housing land supply shortfall will restrict the amount of affordable housing that can be delivered and the LGV will make a valuable contribution of much needed affordable housing.

Local Policy

- 2.1.7 The development plan for Wokingham includes the Core Strategy ("CS") which was adopted in January 2010 to cover the period 2006 – 2026 and is now 15 years old. The approach to affordable housing provision is set out within Policy CP5 'Housing Mix, density and affordability'. Policy CP5 seeks 'up to 50%' affordable housing contributions from all sites of at least 5 (net) dwellings / sites sized at 0.16 (net) hectares and includes specific affordable housing targets for different land types: outside of the defined development locations a minimum of 40% affordable housing is sought through Policy CP5 subject to viability.
- 2.1.8 The LVGV SDL covers areas which fall within the remit of both the Shinfield Neighbourhood Plan ("SNHP" - made in February 2017) and the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan ("ABNHP") area made in April 2020. Neither of these include specific policies for affordable housing.
- 2.1.9 The Council remains in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the 2021 to 2040 period and the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040: Proposed Submission Plan ("LPU") was submitted for examination in February 2025. The LPU continues to seek the on-site provision of affordable housing as a priority.⁷
- 2.1.10 Under Policy H3, the proportion of affordable housing expected is location dependent, varying from between 30% and 40%. The specific LGV requirement 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."

⁶ Paragraphs 60 to 63, pages 11 to 12, Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/24/3350170 Land to the North of the A4, New Bath Road, Twyford, Inspector's Report 5th February 2025

⁷ Paragraph 9.25, page 150, LPU

Affordable housing is expected to be provided in accordance with Policy H3 unless exceptional circumstances arise.

- 2.1.11 Supporting text confirms that where vacant buildings are reused or redeveloped the affordable housing will be reduced by a proportionate amount⁸ and that the Council is supportive of the provision of affordable housing that can assist with meeting the housing needs of Key Workers.⁹
- 2.1.12 LPU Policy SS13 'Loddon Valley Garden Village' refers to 40% affordable housing being provided 'in accordance with Policy H3'.

Affordable Housing Need

- 2.1.13 Live Table 600 published by the Government suggests there to be 1,342 households on the Housing Waiting List seeking rented affordable housing in the Borough as at 31st March 2024.¹⁰
- 2.1.14 The most recent assessment of affordable housing need in Wokingham is provided within the Local Housing Need Assessment 2022 ("LHNA") published in November 2023.¹¹ The LHNA, which acknowledges that no affordability test is required by the NPPF or NPPG to be applied to households eligible for Affordable Home Ownership ("AHO"),¹² concludes an 'overall affordable housing need' for affordable housing to rent and buy from 6,689 households over 19 years 2021 to 2040 (i.e. 352 households per annum).¹³
- 2.1.15 When a significant number of households are excluded by the LHNA on the basis that they cannot afford to buy a First Homes property at a 50% discount to open market value, a 'constrained' need for affordable housing from 1,881 households over 19 years 2021 to 2040¹⁴ is concluded which is then converted into 1,943 dwellings – or 102 dwellings per annum.¹⁵ However, the LPU refers to the overall, unconstrained, need of 352 households per annum.¹⁶

⁸ Paragraph 9.40, page 152, LPU

⁹ Paragraph 9.33, page 151, LPU

¹⁰ Live Table 600, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, updated 5th December 2024

¹¹ This updates the previous Wokingham Borough Local Housing Needs Assessment 2019 ("HNA" – published January 2020)

¹² Paragraph 11, page 8, LHNA

¹³ Figure 2, page 8, LHNA

¹⁴ Figure 3, page 8, LHNA

¹⁵ Figure 4, page 9, LHNA

¹⁶ Paragraph 9.28, page 150, LPU

Summary

- 2.1.16 A total of 40% of the dwellings on the application site will be provided as affordable housing unless exceptional circumstances arise in accordance with adopted and LPU policy and having regard to the emphasis within National Planning Policy and Guidance on meeting the affordable housing need of all eligible households. The provision of key worker accommodation will be subject to negotiation.
- 2.1.17 The size of the Housing Waiting List at 1,342 as at March 2024 (which relates to affordable housing for rent) and the affordable housing need concluded by the LHNA and acknowledged in the LPU (i.e. of up to 6,689 households 2021 to 2040 when all eligible households are included) suggests an acute ongoing demand for affordable housing in the borough.
- 2.1.18 The Wokingham Affordable Housing Topic Paper (September 2024), which forms part of the evidence base underpinning LPU policy, confirms that LVGV is a crucial facet of the Council's planned supply of affordable housing stating that:

“...within the plan period, Loddon Valley Garden Village is anticipated to deliver 1,080 affordable homes, and 1,572 affordable homes in total”

(paragraph 6.4, page 16, Wokingham Affordable Housing Topic Paper, September 2024)

It is apparent that the affordable housing proposed on the application site is a benefit of very substantial weight, particularly in the context of the significant overall housing land supply shortfall in the borough which will restrict the Council's ability to address affordable housing need.

2.2 Tenure

National Planning Policy and Guidance

- 2.2.1 The NPPF does not include tenure split targets, but sets out that the type of affordable housing required should be set out within planning policies and met on-site unless certain exceptions apply.¹⁷
- 2.2.2 The NPPF Annex 2 affordable housing definition confirms that affordable housing is that for sale or rent 'for those whose needs are not met by the market'.¹⁸ This includes housing for all those eligible for subsidised routes to home ownership and footnote 90 clarifies that, whilst the 25% minimum delivery requirement has been removed, First Homes provided in accordance with the 24th May 2021 Affordable Homes Update Written Ministerial Statement ("WMS") continue to be a valid form of affordable housing.¹⁹

Local Policy

- 2.2.3 Policy CP5 in the CS 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. Supporting text indicates a 70% rent / 30% AHO tenure split 'starting point' for negotiations.²⁰ Affordable housing tenure split targets are not set out in the Managing Development Delivery ("MDD" - adopted in February 2014) Local Plan policy wording or supporting text.
- 2.2.4 ABNHP Policy AD2 seeks that proposals will 'contribute to a balanced mix of housing and meet the needs identified in the most current assessment of housing needs' – specific reference is made to the Arborfield and Barkham Housing Needs Analysis 2019.
- 2.2.5 LPU Policy H3 sets out that affordable housing tenure will be subject to negotiation with the Council and provision should reflect the proven needs of households eligible for affordable housing - the policy wording, which refers to the provision of First Homes, was drafted prior to the abolition of the 25% First Homes national policy requirement. However, supporting text indicates a general preference for a 70% rent / 30% AHO tenure split.²¹

¹⁷ NPPF, paragraph 64, page 17

¹⁸ NPPF, Annex 2, page 70

¹⁹ NPPF, Annex 2 and footnote 90, page 70

²⁰ Paragraph 4.32, CS

²¹ Paragraph 9.36, page 151, LPU

2.2.6 The Affordable Housing SPD (“AHSPD”) published in 2013 states that the Council will negotiate the affordable housing tenure split on a site by site basis having regard to housing needs evidence.²²

2.2.7 The Council has an Interim Position Statement (“FHPS”) in respect of First Homes (January 2022) which acknowledges that the Council already has an adopted affordable housing policy and that affordable housing will continue to be delivered in accordance with this.

Affordable Housing Need

2.2.8 As noted at sub-section 3.1 above; the LHNA concludes, and supporting text in the LPU refers to,²³ an overall affordable housing need from 6,689 households (when all those eligible for affordable housing are included) during 2021 to 2040 (over 19 years) of which:

- 5,159 households need Affordable Home Ownership homes as they are unable to afford to buy on the open market despite an aspiration to do so,²⁴
- 1,529 households need rented Affordable Homes as they are unable to afford to rent or buy on the open market.²⁵

This suggests a 23% rent / 77% AHO tenure split.

2.2.9 When the affordable housing need for AHO is constrained to only include households able to afford First Homes at a 50% discount, the LHNA concludes a need for 395 AHO dwellings²⁶ and 1,548 rented affordable dwellings²⁷ (i.e. a 20% AHO and 80% rented affordable housing tenure split). However, the LHNA confirms that this will exclude households that could afford an alternative AHO product such as a form of Shared Ownership.²⁸ A 50% rent and 50% AHO tenure split reflects the mid-point between the LHNA outcomes.

2.2.10 Broad sub-area affordable housing need analysis undertaken within the LHNA (the LVGV SDL falls within the Southern sub-area described in the LHNA)²⁹ does not take account of all

²² Paragraph 8.2, page 8, AHSPD

²³ Paragraph 9.28, page 150, LPU

²⁴ Figure 2, page 8, LHNA

²⁵ Figure 2, page 8, LHNA

²⁶ Having applied a vacancy rate to convert households into dwellings and disaggregated the need across the minimum local housing need figure included in the LHNA – see Figures 44 to 48 of the LHNA

²⁷ Figure 48, page 68, LHNA

²⁸ Paragraph 6.16, page 66, LHNA

²⁹ Figure 53, page 71, LHNA

eligible households aspiring to own their own home and so does not reflect the full need for AHO or affordable housing overall.

- 2.2.11 At a sub-area level the ABNHP Housing Needs Analysis does not present any analysis of affordable housing tenure requirements in the ABNHP area, but comments on there being strong support from residents for housing for First Time Buyers.

Summary

- 2.2.12 National planning policy and adopted and LPU Development Plan policies do not prescribe the tenure split of affordable housing, although a general preference for a 70% rent / 30% AHO tenure split is indicated within supporting text in the LPU.
- 2.2.13 When considering the housing needs evidence within the LHNA where all eligible households are included (reflective of the affordable housing quantum quoted in the LPU supporting text) then most of the affordable housing need (77%) is for AHO. The LHNA acknowledges that a wider range of AHO needs can be met where a range of AHO products are made available.
- 2.2.14 It is proposed that the tenure split on the application site will be established through negotiation with the Council in accordance with adopted policy. It is apparent there will be an important role for AHO within the LVGV SDL to ensure the delivery of a sustainable development capable of meeting a diverse range of needs.

2.3 Mix

National and Local Planning Policy

- 2.3.1 The NPPF states that planning policies should reflect the size, type and tenure of homes needed by different groups in the community³⁰ and sets out that Plan policies should specify the type of affordable housing sought where a need for it has been established.³¹
- 2.3.2 Adopted CS policies do not prescribe affordable housing mix. Supporting text seeks that a range of dwelling types and sizes should be provided on larger developments to reflect changing needs and demographics in the Borough.³²

³⁰ paragraph 63, page 17, NPPF

³¹ paragraph 64, page 17, NPPF

³² Paragraph 4.35, CS

- 2.3.3 The Managing Development Delivery (“MDD”) Local Plan adopted in February 2014 includes Policy TB05 ‘Housing Mix’ – this seeks a mix of housing and 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.
- 2.3.4 Supporting text in the MDD suggests a ‘guide’ affordable housing mix but this is based on a 2010 Housing Strategy.³³ In terms of more recent strategy documents the Wokingham Borough Council Affordable Housing Strategy 2024-2028 (published in April 2024) does not include affordable housing mix preferences.
- 2.3.5 The 2013 Affordable Housing SPD, which includes Council preferences in respect of affordable housing tenure and mix, draws upon an out of date 2012 ‘update to the Housing Needs Assessment’³⁴ since superseded by the LHNA.
- 2.3.6 LPU Policies H1 (Housing Mix) and H3 (affordable housing) do not prescribe affordable housing mix. Supporting text within the LPU includes an ‘indicative’ affordable housing mix based on the LHNA as follows:

Figure 2.3.1 - Indicative Affordable Housing Mix

1 bedroom	17%
2 bedrooms	38%
3 bedrooms	33%
4+ bedrooms	12%

Source: LPU, Supporting Text to Policy H1 - Table 7, page 145

Supporting text in the LPU confirms that the final mix of dwelling types and sizes will be negotiated with applicants.³⁵

- 2.3.7 At a Neighbourhood Plan level the ABNHP policy AD2 does not include an affordable housing mix breakdown but seeks that provision meets ‘...the needs identified in the most current assessment of housing needs - at the time of publication this is the Arborfield and Barkham Housing Needs Analysis 2019’.

³³ Paragraph 3.23, MDD

³⁴ Page 5, HS15

³⁵ Paragraph 9.8, pages 145 – 146, LPU

Affordable Housing Need

- 2.3.8 The LPU indicative overall affordable housing mix is based on Figure 42 of the LHNA (page 62) – Figure 42 also provides the following further breakdown of affordable housing need:

Figure 2.3.2 – LHNA Affordable Housing Mix

	Unable to Afford to Rent or Buy on the Open Market	Households able to Afford to Rent, but not Buy on the Open Market, Aspiring to Home Ownership
1 bed	14.9%	24.7%
2 bed	36.3%	46.6%
3 bed	35.7%	20.7%
4+ bed	13.1%	8.0%

Source: Figure 42, page 62, LHNA 2023

- 2.3.9 The latest Housing Waiting List data published by the Government in the Local Authority Housing Statistics (“LAHS”) suggests the majority (c.71%) of rented affordable housing need is for 1 and 2 bedroom homes, whilst 6% is for four bedrooms or more:

Figure 2.3.2a – Wokingham Housing Waiting List Data 2021/22

Total number of households on the housing register (waiting list)	How many bedrooms did these households require?				
	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	More than 3 bedrooms	Unspecified number of bedrooms or those on the register more than once
1342	603	344	316	79	0
100%	45%	26%	24%	6%	0%

Source: Local Authority Housing Statistics 2023/24, Tab ‘C’

- 2.3.10 The Arborfield and Barkham Housing Needs Analysis 2019 includes Housing Waiting List data (i.e. indicating the ‘current’ or ‘backlog’ requirement for rented affordable housing) for the ABNHP area which suggests the following localised rented affordable housing dwelling size requirements:

Figure 2.3.3 – ABNHP (March 2019) Area Housing Waiting List Data

Dwelling Size	Housing Waiting List (Count)	Housing Waiting List (%)
1	11	33.3%
2	10	30.3%
3	10	30.3%
4+	2	6.1%
Total	33	100.0%

Source: ABNHP Annex XI Housing Needs Analysis March 2019, Figure 12

The majority (c.64%) of households waiting for rented affordable housing in the ABNHP area are suggested to require 1 and 2 bedroom homes.

- 2.3.11 The above reflects households waiting for rented affordable housing, but in terms of households waiting for Affordable Home Ownership Help to Buy Register data obtained from Homes England in January 2023 provides the most recent available data.³⁶ This suggests the following Affordable housing for sale³⁷ mix requirement for Wokingham and within the environs of the application site as at 2023:

Figure 2.3.4 - Wokingham Help to Buy Data January 2023

Dwelling Size	Housing Waiting List (%)			
	Wokingham Borough	Aborfield	Barkham	Shinfield
1	18%	18%	14%	16%
2	50%	49%	47%	46%
3	29%	31%	34%	34%
4+	3%	2%	5%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Homes England, 19th January 2023

The above suggests that the majority of demand (c.80%) at a borough and sub-area level is for affordable housing for sale with 2 and 3 bedrooms. Additionally, Registered Providers are likely to express a preference for Shared Ownership homes to be provided as two and three bedroom houses.

- 2.3.12 Information on the requirements of households looking to purchase an Affordable Home in the ABNHP area is not presented in the Arborfield and Barkham Housing Needs Analysis 2019, although the analysis concludes that ‘starter homes for younger age groups’ are a priority (i.e. as opposed to larger family affordable housing for sale).

Summary

- 2.3.13 National planning policy and adopted and LPU Development Plan policies do not prescribe the mix of affordable housing, although an indicative overall affordable housing mix based on the 2023 LHNA is referenced within supporting text in the LPU.

³⁶ A central AHO register is no longer maintained with individual Housing Associations now maintaining their own lists the contents of which are not publicly available

³⁷ The Homes England response lists demand in respect of Shared Ownership (predominantly) and Rent to Buy products.

2.3.14 Having regard to the mix of affordable homes for rent and sale suggested by the LHNA, the need to secure Registered Provider interest and in the context of housing waiting list data for rented and AHO homes within the environs of the application site, the following overarching indicative mix of homes represents a reasonable mix of affordable housing within the LVGV SDL:

Figure 2.3.5 – Potential Affordable Housing Mix*

	Rent	AHO
1 bed	15%	0%
2 beds	44%	70%
3 beds	35%	30%
4+ beds	6%	0%
TOTAL	100%	100%

Source: Pioneer Analysis based on Figure 42, page 62, LHNA, ABNHP Annex XI Figure 12 and Homes England, 19th January 2023

*The above is subject to rounding and should be subject to plus or minus 1% for flexibility to enable mixed tenure apartment blocks to be avoided and to the mix within individual parcels and phases being able to flex subject to the above overall provision being made across the whole application site.

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 application site will provide a mix sizes and types of affordable homes with the final mix proportions being the subject of negotiation with the Council in accordance with adopted policy.

2.4 Delivery, Timing, Distribution and Standards

- 2.4.1 Rented and Shared Ownership affordable dwellings will be managed by organisations that have been accredited for such purposes by Homes England (formerly the Homes and Communities Agency). Many private Registered Providers fulfil these requirements. At this stage a Registered Provider has not been identified.
- 2.4.2 The AHSPD includes information on the Council's preferences in respect of timing and seeks that affordable housing is '*built out in line with private market units or in line with an affordable housing phasing strategy agreed by the Council*'.³⁸ As such, it is proposed that the timing of the affordable housing delivery will be established through discussion and agreement with the Council.
- 2.4.3 Specific cluster sizes for affordable housing are not specified in either Development Plan policy or AHSPD wording. It is proposed that the affordable housing will be distributed within

³⁸ paragraph 6.6, AHSPD

the site having regard to the need to integrate successfully with the market housing whilst also reflecting negotiations with the Council and Registered Provider management preferences.

- 2.4.4 The affordable housing will be constructed in line with Building Regulations and subject to agreement with the Council.

2.5 Nominations

- 2.5.1 The Local Authority will be offered 100% nomination rights to initial 'rent' lettings and 75% of true voids thereafter.
- 2.5.2 It is anticipated that rented and Shared Ownership dwellings will be marketed in conjunction in with organisations that have been accredited for such purposes by Homes England (formerly the Homes and Communities Agency). Many private Registered Providers fulfil these requirements.

3 Conclusion

- 3.1 This Statement, which relates to the proposed residential development by the University of Reading (“the applicant”) of up to 2,800 new homes within Loddon Valley Garden Village in Wokingham Borough (the “application site”), sets out the affordable housing proposals for the application site, having regard to relevant planning policy and supporting evidence. The applicant proposes to provide the quantum, tenure and mix of affordable housing as summarised in the following paragraphs.

Quantum

- 3.2 The Government has made it clear that affordable housing delivery remains a key priority and additional reference to affordable housing now included in the December 2024 NPPF paragraph 11 which places even greater weight on affordable housing delivery than prior NPPF iterations. The NPPF includes the clear objective of ‘significantly boosting the supply of homes’ overall and confirms that the ‘minimum number of homes needed’ should be informed by a local housing need assessment.
- 3.3 Adopted Development Plan policy seeks 40% affordable housing from the application site subject to viability. Under LPU Policy H3, the proportion of affordable housing expected is location dependent, varying from between 30% and 40%. The specific LGV requirement is 40%. In exceptional circumstances Policy H3 allows for an independently produced, open book viability assessment to be submitted where any relaxation of the requirement is sought. Affordable housing is expected to be provided in accordance with the Policy H3 40% requirement unless exceptional circumstances arise. The provision of key worker accommodation will be subject to negotiation.
- 3.4 The Local Housing Need Assessment 2022 (“LHNA”) published in 2023 concludes an ‘overall affordable housing need’ from 352 households per annum (i.e. 6,688 during 2021 to 2040) as set out at paragraph 9.28 of the LPU.
- 3.5 The size of the rented affordable housing waiting list at 1,342 as at March 2024 and the affordable housing need concluded by the LHNA and acknowledged in the LPU (i.e. of up to 6,689 households 2021 to 2040) suggests an acute ongoing demand for affordable housing in the borough.

- 3.6 The proposed affordable housing is a benefit of substantial weight which will assist with meeting the pressing need for affordable housing in the borough, particularly in the context of the significant overall housing land supply shortfall.

Tenure

- 3.7 The NPPF sets out that the need for different types, sizes and tenures of housing should be assessed and policy should reflect this. Specifically in respect of affordable housing, where a need is established planning policies should specify the type required.
- 3.8 Adopted Development Plan policy does not specify an affordable housing tenure split target, but confirms that affordable housing provision should reflect proven need, whilst supporting text to CS Policy CP5 refers to tenure split being negotiated. The Affordable Housing SPD ("AHSPD") also refers to affordable housing tenure split being negotiated on a site by site basis having regard to housing needs evidence. That tenure split will be negotiated and meet the proven needs of eligible households is re-stated within LPU Policy H3.
- 3.9 The LHNA suggests that the majority of the 352 per annum affordable housing need (77%) is for AHO, although, despite an aspiration to own their own home, not all of these households will be able to afford a AHO home. The LHNA acknowledges that AHO provided with a range of housing costs is likely to be necessary to maximise the level of AHO need that can be met.
- 3.10 It is proposed that the tenure split will be subject to negotiation with the Council in accordance with adopted policy with the objective of ensuring a sustainable development capable of meeting a diverse range of needs.

Mix

- 3.11 National planning policy and adopted and LPU Development Plan policies do not prescribe the mix of affordable housing. 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 c.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. For AHO, having regard to the assessed need and likely purchaser and Registered Provider preferences, c.65% two bedroom (mainly houses) and c.35% three bedroom houses would represent a reasonable proposal.

- 3.12 It is proposed that the LGV application site will provide a mix of sizes and types of affordable homes the final proportions of which will be the subject of negotiation with the Council in accordance with adopted Plan policy.

Summary

- 3.13 The application proposal to provide 40% affordable housing in accordance with LPU Policy H3, for rent and sale across a range of 1-, 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom flats and houses to meet proven local affordable housing need, will assist the Council (who currently has a housing land supply deficit) with addressing affordable housing need across the local authority area and is a benefit of very substantial weight.