Newlands Farm (Loddon Valley Garden Village)

EIA Non-Technical Summary

November 2025

Prepared on behalf of

gleeson land
Promoting Land. Unlocking Value.

savills

Document title:	EIA Non-Technical Summary
Project:	Newlands Farm (Loddon Valley Garden Village)
Client:	Gleeson Land

Contents

Non-Technical Summary

1. Introduction

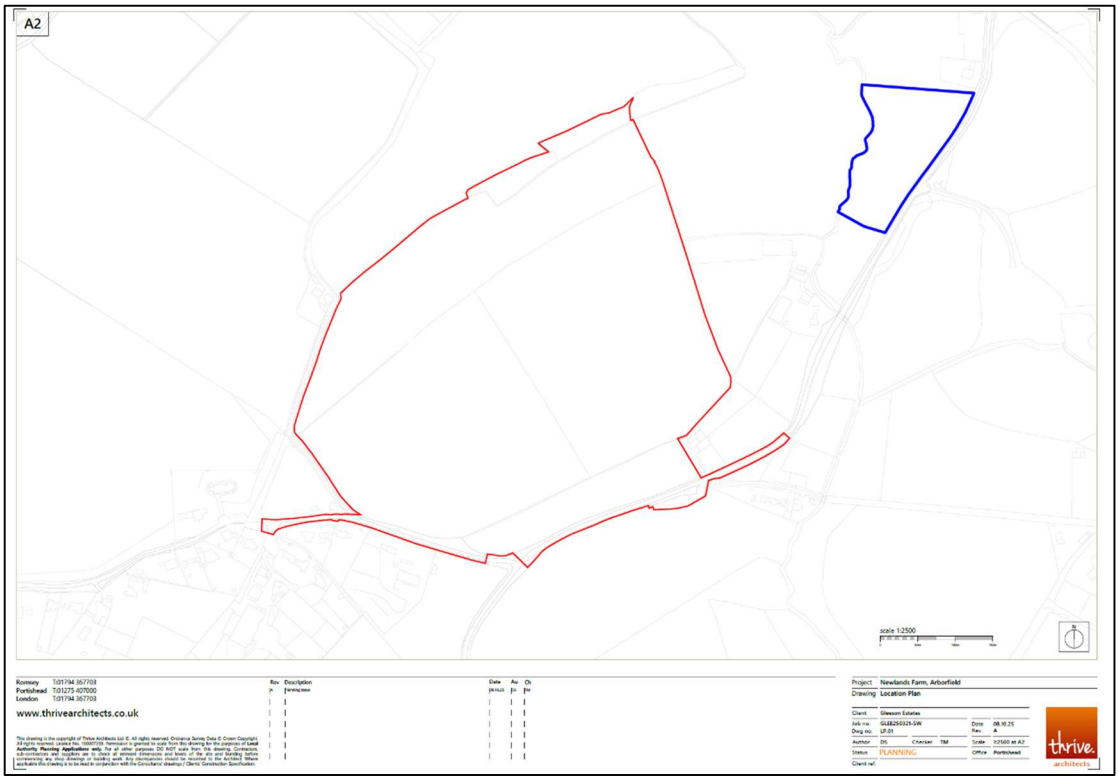
Background

1.1 Gleeson Land (the Applicant) has submitted an Outline planning application to Wokingham Borough Council (WBC, the Council) seeking planning consent for the development of land at Newlands Farm that falls within the Loddon Valley Garden Village (LVGV) Strategic Development Location (SDL), Wokingham (the 'Site').

1.2 The Proposed Development comprises: up to 430 dwellings; a vehicular bus, cycle, and pedestrian corridor between Mole Road and the northern boundary of the Site, to connect with the proposed Loddon Garden Village spine road; a new pedestrian and cycle link between Byway ARB03 (Carter's Hill Lane) and Byway ARB08 (Ellis's Hill); comprehensive strategic landscaping and a network of multi-functional green and blue infrastructure; biodiversity enhancements to achieve at least a net gain of 10%; and associated utilities, infrastructure, and engineering works. All matters reserved other than details for the approval of the principal access from Mole Road. A full description of development is set out within Section 3.

1.3 The Site is a large area of land to the west of Wokingham, to the north of the village of Arborfield and south west of the village of Shinfield. It is located outside of the Green Belt. The location and extent of the Site is identified by the red line shown on Figure 1.1 below. In total, the Site covers an area of approximately 23.35 hectares (ha). The Site falls within the administrative boundary of Wokingham Borough Council (WBC).

Figure 1.1 Site Location Plan



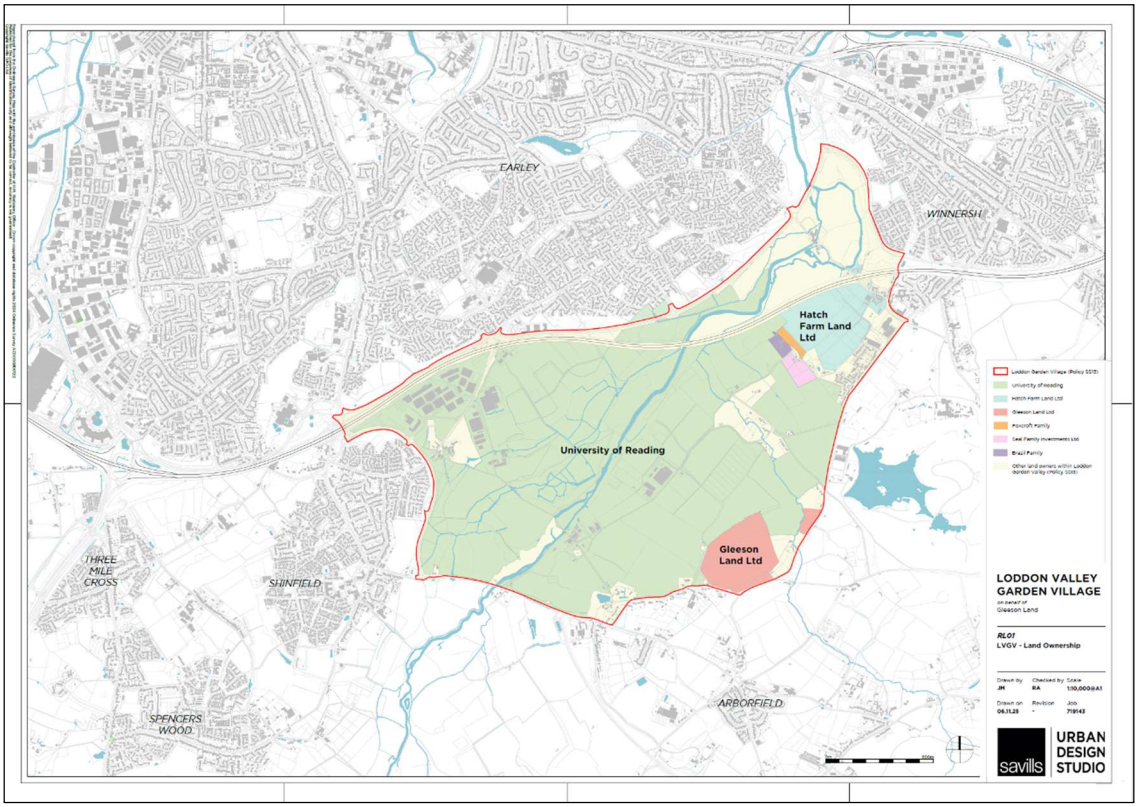
Planning Context - The Wider Strategic Development Location – Loddon Valley Garden Village

1.4 The Site is located on land proposed to be allocated as a Strategic Development Location (SDL) in the emerging Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU). The SDL is referred to in the LPU as the Loddon Valley Garden Village (LVGV) and this application is referred to as Newlands Farm. The development principles for the LVGV are set out in LPU Policy SS13 (Hall Farm / Loddon Valley Strategic Development Location). This policy includes phased delivery of around 3,930 dwellings, expansion of the Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park, neighbourhood centres (including retail, leisure, sports, cultural, health and service facilities), and education provision.

1.5 The LPU was submitted for Examination on the 28 February 2025. The Examination is expected to continue throughout 2025 before the LPU is adopted in 2026.

1.6 The land comprising the SDL is primarily owned by three landowners: Gleeson Land, The University of Reading, and Hatch Farm Land Ltd (the Landowners). The combined area for the SDL extends to 732.57 hectares (ha). The red line boundary for the SDL is shown in Figure 1.2 alongside the associated land ownerships.

Figure 1.2 Red line boundary for the Loddon Valley Garden Village SDL



Environmental Impact Assessment

1.7 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process that formally considers the construction and operational aspects of a proposal that may have significant effects on the environment.

Screening

1.8 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the 'EIA Regulations') set out the types of development that must always be subject to an EIA (defined as Schedule 1 development) and other development that will only require assessment if it is likely to give rise to significant environmental effects (defined as Schedule 2 development).The process to establish whether an EIA is required is known as Screening.

1.9 Given the nature and scale of the Proposed Development, when taken in combination with the wider LVGV, the Applicant concluded that significant environmental effects could arise. Therefore, it was considered that the Proposed Development qualifies as EIA development as defined within the EIA Regulations. As such, a formal Screening Opinion was not requested prior to beginning the EIA process.

Scoping and EIA Consultation

1.10 In December 2024, a request for the formal EIA Scoping Opinion of WBC was submitted on behalf of the Landowners. A single EIA Scoping Opinion was requested from WBC relating to development across all land interests within the allocation area. The purpose of this was to identify what the Council considers to be the main environmental issues associated with the LVGV and the Proposed Development to be assessed within the EIA.

1.11 As part of the Scoping process, statutory consultees were advised of the proposals and given the opportunity to provide comments in order to assist the Council in the formulation of their Scoping Opinion.

1.12 As agreed through the scoping process, the following environmental topics have been included in the EIA.

- Air quality
- Archaeology
- Built Heritage
- Climate change and greenhouse gases
- Ecology
- Human health
- Hydrology (flood risk and drainage)
- Landscape and visual impact
- Noise and vibration
- Socioeconomics
- Transport and access

1.13 Impacts related to agricultural land and soils were also scoped in to the EIA but, as agreed through the scoping process, are addressed through the production of an Agricultural Land Classification report which has been considered within the EIA where applicable.

1.14 These topics have been assessed through the EIA process, and the outcome of the assessments have been presented in the Environmental Statement (ES) and are also summarised in Section 6 of this Non-Technical Summary (NTS).

Environmental Statement

1.15 The findings of an EIA are described in a written report known as an Environmental Statement (ES). An ES provides environmental information about the scheme, including a description of the development, its predicted environmental effects and the measures proposed to mitigate adverse effects: information that is taken into account in the planning decision. The ES has been prepared in accordance with the EIA Regulations.

1.16 This document is the Non-Technical Summary (NTS), which provides a summary of the main findings of the ES, including the significant environmental effects, mitigation and residual effects predicted to result from the Proposed Development.

1.17 Subsequently, when the Council is deciding whether to grant planning permission, it can do so in the full knowledge of any significant effects predicted and take this into account in the decision-making process.

1.18 The Applicant has commissioned Savills to co-ordinate a formal Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) including the preparation of an Environmental Statement (ES) and Non-Technical Summary (NTS) (this document) to support the planning application for the Site.

1.19 The NTS sets out the key issues and findings of the ES in a manner that is widely accessible to the general public and stakeholders.

1.20 The ES and this NTS accompany a suite of documents that together support the planning application submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), WBC.

2 Site and Local Context

2.1 The Site is located north of Arborfield and southeast of Shinfield. The Site is within short distances to other main centres of employment in the locality, such as Reading International Business Park, approximately 4.5km northwest, and Green Park Business Park, approximately 5.8km northwest. The extent of the Site is identified by the red line shown in Figure 1.1. In total, the Site covers an area of approximately 23.35 hectares (ha).

2.2 The Site is comprised of farmland, with an electricity pylon and overhead cables to the western side of the Site running north to south. The agricultural land quality of the Site varies between grade 3a (55%) and 3b (45%).

2.3 The Site topography falls gently from 59m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the southwest of the Site to 47m AOD in the east. The Site is bounded mainly by hedgerows and there are some field hedges and a few trees scattered in and along the boundaries of the Site. The Barkham Brook runs along the eastern boundary of the Site from southeast to northwest and the River Loddon is around 1km northwest of the Site. There are linear areas of surface water flooding on the Site.

2.4 The Site is located to the north of Mole Road and Church Lane and south of the Wider LVGV SDL, directly south of the University of Reading parcel. The HFLL land and Sindlesham, which is mainly of a residential nature with some industrial uses, are situated approximately 1.3km northeast of the Site.

2.5 Approximately 300m south of the Site are the existing villages of Arborfield and Arborfield Cross. Further to the south is Arborfield Garrison; a strategic residential development of circa 3,500 homes. The delivery of Arborfield Garrison is well advanced with the building phase commencing in 2016. To the northwest of the Site is Shinfield, a village that has grown significantly in recent years as part of the 'South of the M4 Strategic Development Location', which was allocated in the previous Wokingham Borough Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (January 2010).

2.6 The M4 runs approximately 1.34km to the north of the Site. The Thames Valley Science Park is located approximately 2.0km to the northwest of the Site.

2.7 Beyond the M4 is the established residential area of Earley. Reading town centre and Reading railway station are located approximately 7.0km further north west. Wokingham town centre is located approximately 5.0km east of the Site. Train stations are also located at Earley, Winnersh Triangle and Winnersh. The site is within short distances to other main centres of employment in the locality, such as Reading International Business Park and Green Park Business Park. Approximately 700m east of the Site is the Bearwood Lakes Golf Club beyond which is the residential area of Woosehill.

Site Access and Public Rights of Way

2.8 The Site benefits from strong transport links, including nearby access to the M4 motorway, multiple bus routes, and rail stations such as Winnersh and Reading. It also offers good pedestrian and cycle connectivity.

2.9 Although not within the Site, there are a number of public rights of way nearby.

Archaeology and Built Heritage

Archaeology

2.10 There are no Scheduled Monuments in the site boundary. However, the Scheduled Monument of St Bartholomew's Church is to the northwest of the site. The remains of this Church are also Grade II listed.

2.11 The southwestern corner of the Site and the eastern half of the Site are located within an area of high archaeological potential as defined by the adopted WBC Planning Policy Proposals Map.

Built Heritage

2.12 There are no designated heritage assets within the Site boundary.

2.13 Within a 1km search radius of the Site there are around five listed buildings, all of which are Grade II listed. The Reading Room built heritage asset is located immediately south of the Site and Monk's Cottage is located immediately north of the Site. Bearwood Park, a Grade II* registered park and garden, is approximately 500m northeast of the Site.

Flood Risk and Drainage

2.14 With reference to the Environment Agency's online Flood Map for Planning, the Site is in Flood Zone 1, although there is an area of Flood Zone 2 and 3 outside of the Site to the east, immediately adjacent to Barkham Brook. There are also linear pockets of surface water flooding to the south, north and east of the Site shown as having a high risk of surface water flooding.

Ecology and Nature Conservation

2.15 There are no statutory designated ecological or conservation sites within the Site. The closest statutory designated sites of national importance are four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) all within approximately 5km of the Site: Lodge Wood and Sandford Mill SSSI; Longmoor Bog SSSI; Bramshill SSSI; Stanford End Mill and River Loddon SSSI.

2.16 Twelve Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are located within a 2km radius of the Site. No sites are located within or immediately adjacent to the Site boundary.

2.17 The Site is located approximately 4.4km north of the designated Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA).

Air Quality

2.18 WBC has designated 60m on both sides of the M4, throughout the Borough, as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) due to high levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) pollution from road traffic. The AQMA was declared on 28 September 2001. The Site is around 1.2km south of this designated AQMA.

Noise

2.19 There are a number of existing noise sources within the vicinity of the Site. With main sources of noise from road traffic from the M4 motorway and surrounding local road network including the A327 and Mole Road. The M4 motorway, is a noise generating area to the north of the Site with very high existing road traffic noise levels however, due to the Site's distance from the M4, these are likely to be significantly reduced.

Utilities

2.20 The Site contains an overhead powerline, electricity pylon and gas Main. This includes high voltage overhead power. 132kV cables run north to south on the western side of the Site. 33kV cables are located on the western side of the Site, outside the area of the proposed development.

2.21 A medium pressure gas main is located in Mole Road on the southern boundary of the Site, turns north west and crosses the Site.

3 Proposed Development

3.1 As noted above, the Proposed Development which has been assessed within the EIA comprises:

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

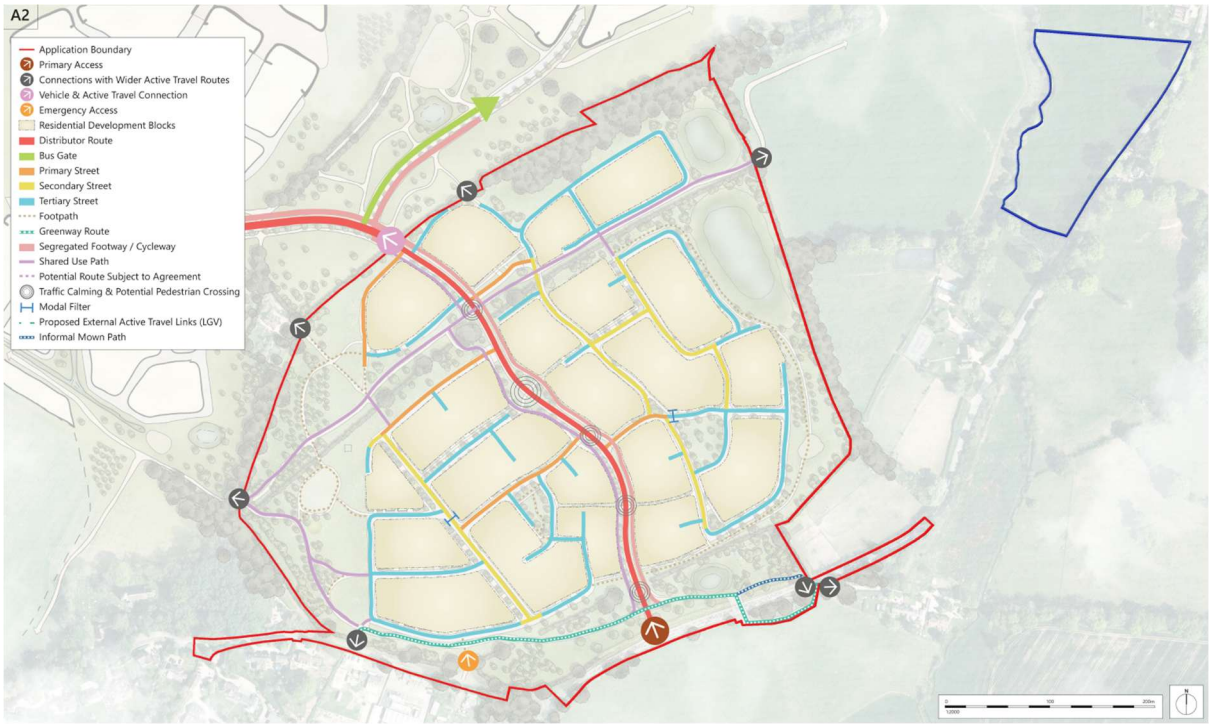
- *up to 430 dwellings;*
- *vehicular, bus, cycle and pedestrian corridor between Mole Road and northern boundary of site, to connect with the proposed Loddon Garden Village spine road;*
- *New pedestrian and cycle link between Byway ARB03 (Carter's Hill Lane) and Byway ARB08 (Ellis's Hill);*
- *Comprehensive 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."

3.3 The maximum quantum's of development listed above have formed the basis of the assessments within the EIA. A series of Parameter Plans have been produced supporting the Planning Application. These plans will inform and guide potential future development on the Site, and cover: Route Hierarchy, Framework Plan, Storey Heights, Landscape & Land Use.

3.4 **Figure 3.1 – Route Hierarchy Plan** – The proposed Route Hierarchy Plan envisions a clear hierarchy of streets that are safe a legible. The road network creates a permeable development through several primary, secondary and tertiary routes which link off the main spine road, alongside further footpaths and greenway routes. The Site is proposed to have two main primary vehicular access routes from Mole Road to the south, and via the University's Loddon Garden Village (LGV) parcel to the north. Traffic calming and potential pedestrian crossing points are proposed along the primary access road whilst connections with wider active travel routes are planned throughout the Site. Emergency access is provided off Church Lane to the southwest and a shared equestrian access is provided to the southeast.

Figure 3.1 Route Hierarchy Plan

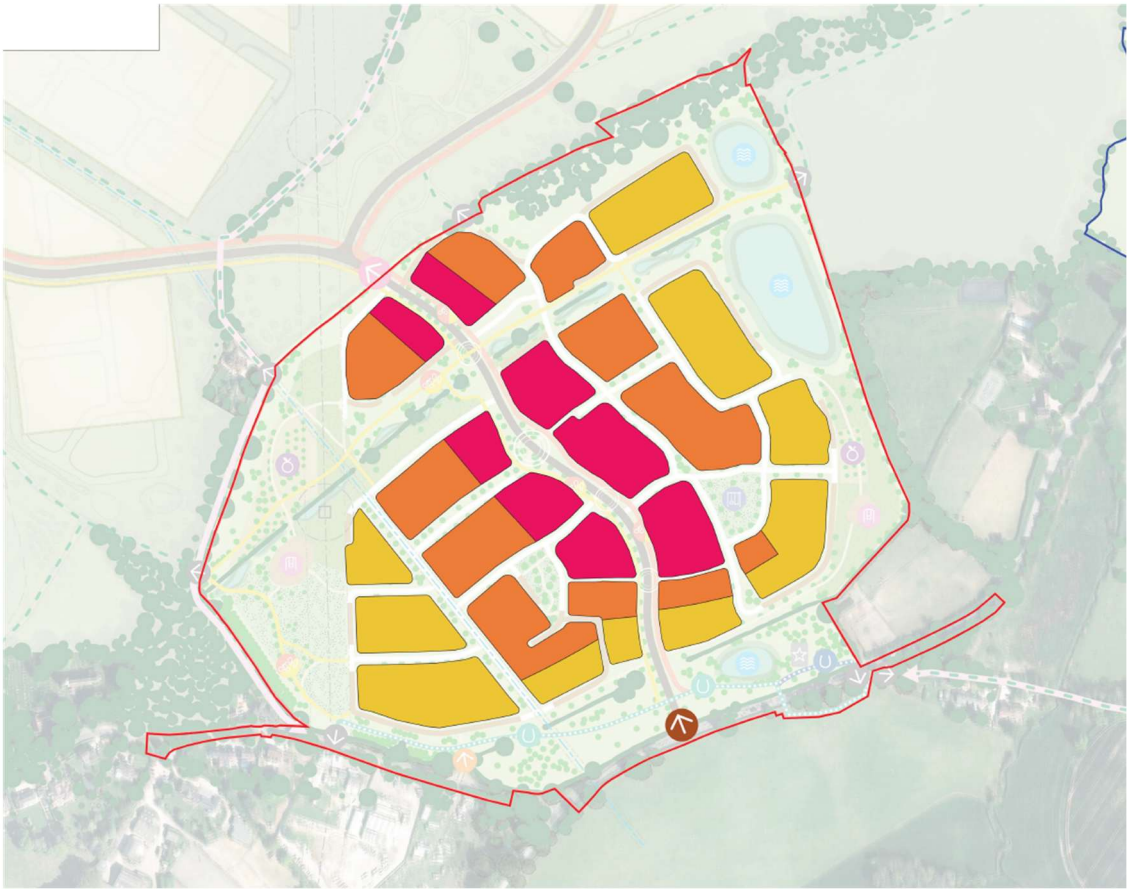


3.5 **Figure 3.2 – Framework Plan** – The proposed Framework Plan sets out the areas identified for residential development, play and open space, drainage features and planting alongside access and active travel routes. The plan shows that the development will be located to the east and west of a primary access route that connects the site to Mole Road to the south, and the Loddon Garden Village area to the north. Features such as attenuation basins, greenspaces and greenways will be located along the outer edge of the Application Site.

Figure 3.2 Framework Plan

3.6 **Figure 3.3 – Storey Heights Plan** – The proposed maximum Storey Heights parameter plan aims to maximise housing delivery whilst also considering the sensitivities of the surrounding context. The plan shows that the development with the maximum proposed heights of up to four storeys (max 16m ridge height) is to be located within the centre of the Site along the spine road. Moving outwards from the centre of the Site, building heights reduce to up to three storeys (max 12m ridge height), and finally to up to two storeys (max 9m ridge height) on the more sensitive edges of the development area.

Figure 3.3 Storey Heights Plan



3.7 **Figure 3.4 – Landscape and Land Use Plan** – The Landscape and Land Use Plan sets out the combined land use of the areas of residential development, the spine road, public open space, blue/green infrastructure, woodland buffer, play space, communal food production and potential internal green corridors into a comprehensive plan which the future reserved matters application will be based on.

Figure 3.4 Landscape and Land Use Plan

3.8 **Figure 3.5 – Illustrative Masterplan** – The Illustrative Masterplan (Illustrative Master Plan IMP.01 P1) for the Proposed Development is shown in Figure 3.6. The plan sets out a proposed layout for the development of the Site within the redline boundary. The Site area is approximately 23.35 ha.

Figure 3.5 Illustrative Masterplan

3.9 The following sections provide further details on the Proposed Development and the relevant strategies underpinning the proposals (for example access, dragline, landscape etc.).

Land Use

3.10 The Site measures approximately 23.35ha overall. The Land Use plan sets out areas across the Site, within which the major components, as shown on the Parameter Plans, include:

- Developable area: 11.69 ha
- Parks and public gardens 1.149 ha
- Natural/semi-natural green space: 6.90 ha
- Amenity greenspace 1.318 ha
- Play space: 0.259 ha
- Allotments 0.560 ha

Access

3.11 Access to the Site is proposed from the B3030 Mole Road to the south (See Drawing ITB17371-GA-010). In addition to the following is proposed:

- A new emergency vehicle and pedestrian/cycle access off Church Lane;
- A new pedestrian/cycle access to Mole Road in the vicinity of Ellis' Hill;

3.12 The access strategy seeks to achieve convenient and direct pedestrian and cycle access across the Site, fitting with the active travel strategy for the wider LVGV site.

Vehicular access and car parking

3.13 The proposed vehicular access to the site is to be provided off the B3030 Mole Road to the south and from the University's LGV parcel to the north. An emergency vehicle access is also to be provided off Church Lane.

3.14 Car parking proposals are not included in detail within this application but the majority is anticipated to be provided within garages, on residential driveways or parking courts across the Site with on street parking for visitor, car club and non-residential blue badge bays. EV charging will be provided across the Site.

Pedestrian and cycle access and parking

3.15 Segregated cycleways will be provided to a high specification along the main spine road, and will be supplemented by an extensive network of shared use footways / cycleways throughout the Site. Off-road routes follow corridors which respond positively to WBC's planned Greenway networks in the area (identified through the WBC Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020-2030). 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 Way in these areas.

3.16 Cycle parking will be provided in accordance with WBC Standards and will include spaces for larger, adaptable cycles and the long stay spaces will be secure and covered. Additionally, visitor (short-stay) cycle parking will also be provided.

Public transport connectivity

3.17 Public transport connections are available nearby. The nearest train station, Winnersh, is approximately 3.4km to the northeast and offers frequent services between Reading and London Waterloo. Reading Station, a key hub in the national rail network, is 7.0km north, while Wokingham Railway Station is located approximately 4.3km east of the Site.

3.18 Multiple bus routes operate within the vicinity of the Site.

Servicing and refuse

3.19 Safe delivery, collection, servicing, refuse and recycling arrangements will be provided across the Site. These measures will be incorporated into the design of the proposals at the Reserved Matters stage.

3.20 A servicing strategy will be developed to ensure that delivery and refuse collection activity can be accommodated safely and efficiently. It is anticipated that servicing will be highly managed and conducted in dedicated areas to minimise impact on the public realm.

3.21 Servicing and refuse management will be monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure it is as efficient as possible.

Drainage

3.22 A Drainage Strategy has been produced by Abley Letchford. Given the application is being submitted mostly in Outline, the drainage strategy sets out the drainage design parameters that are proposed to inform the future drainage design and approvals for the Site.

3.23 The proposed drainage network is designed not to exacerbate any existing flood risk associated with properties situated upstream, or downstream, of the Site in accordance with principles set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Surface Water Drainage Strategy

3.24 The proposed Drainage Strategy has been developed to achieve the requirements of NPPF and Adopted and Emerging Local Plan policies and foresees the provision of a comprehensive Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) which is provided as part of the Drainage Strategy submitted as part of this application (see Appendix 13.1). The utilisation of SuDS not only provides the benefit of controlling waters at source and online treatment of collected surface water but also allows enhanced aesthetics through improved landscaping, biodiversity, and ecological opportunities.

3.25 SuDS are proposed as mitigation and assumptions have been made in order to appropriately size attenuation for surface water flows. As the underlying geology is not conducive to the use of infiltration type techniques the surface water drainage proposals will be designed to attenuate runoff with controlled discharge to the existing local watercourses.

3.26 The proposed surface water drainage strategy will manage the flood risk posed by uncontrolled surface water runoff from the site. Any increase in surface water run-off can be managed using SuDS source control techniques as well as attenuation features to provide storage in extreme storm events. This provides the minimum of two treatment storage stages which is in accordance with the recommendations of CIRIA C753. All surface water drainage systems will be designed to restrict drainage discharge rates to QBAR runoff rates and store the balance of water for all events up to and including the 1 in 100-year event including an allowance for a 40% increase in rainfall intensities as a result of climate change and urban creep.Basins will form an integral part of the landscape and will be designed to reflect the landscape typologies within which they are located. Careful integration of landscape and green infrastructure will further support sustainable drainage objectives, while also contributing to the overall ecological value and visual appeal of the development. For example, within amenity green space, the basins will be designed with side slopes with a maximum gradient of 1 in 5 to provide access for amenity use. Where appropriate and safe to do so, informal seating and steps may be included as well as features to promote play. These basins will be predominantly dry until rainfall events.

3.27 It is proposed to provide a network of roadside swales, bioretention features such as filter strips, and traditional pipes to collect the surface water runoff from impermeable areas such as roads, roofs and driveways.

Foul Water Drainage Strategy

3.28 There are no existing foul sewers within the Site and therefore new points of connection will be established. Thames Water sewers are located in Church Lane to the west of the Site. This includes a gravity network discharging to a local pump station with flows ultimately being

pumped to the Arborfield Sewage Treatment Works which is located approximately 2km from the Site.

3.29 Due to the topography of the Site and location of the public foul sewer network, wastewater from the Site cannot flow entirely by gravity to the receiving public sewer and a pump station will be required.

3.30 Initial discussions between Abley Letchford and Thames Water have taken place.

3.31 This initial Pre-Planning Enquiry to Thames Water has established inadequate sewer capacity within the immediate vicinity and known performance issues at the Arborfield Sewage Treatment Works. 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. Thames Water will not commence modelling until they are confident that development will take place, for example once outline planning permission has been granted.

3.32 The proposed foul water sewers and pump station will be designed in collaboration with Thames Water as approving body in accordance with the new Sewerage Sector Guidance (SSG) and will be offered to Thames Water or New Appointment Variation (NAV) for adoption under S104 Agreements of the Water Industry Act.

Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement

3.33 The Ecological Impact Assessment for the Proposed Development has been produced by Ecological Planning and Research Ltd. (EPR) and sets out the likely significant effects on biodiversity and ecology.

3.34 Twelve Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are located within a 2km radius of the Site. No sites are located within or immediately adjacent to the Site boundary.

3.35 The Site is located approximately 4.35km north of the designated Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). The Thames Basin Heaths is designated because it supports populations of Dartford Warbler Sylvia undata, Nightjar Camprimulgus europaeus and Woodlark Lullula arborea.

3.36 The Proposed Development is likely to lead to some habitat loss, disturbance of species and changes in water quality, however, the Proposed Development includes a significant amount of mitigation both inherent in the design of the proposals, particularly through the provision of Biodiversity Net Gain, and as additional mitigation and compensation which will address any residual negative effects.

3.37 In summary, the Proposed Development will implement a range of ecological mitigation strategies, including a Construction Environmental Management Plan to control pollution, buffer zones for important habitats, tree root protection, and a detailed drainage plan to safeguard water quality. Lighting and access will be managed to minimise impacts on wildlife. Additional targeted actions include improving habitats for bats, ensuring their protection and supporting biodiversity throughout the development.

Landscape

3.38 The Landscape and Land Use Parameter Plan (Figure 3.4) details the location, quantum and specification of the open spaces, public realms and play spaces as well as the key landscape features for the Proposed Development.

3.39 A Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment and Landscape Strategy has been prepared by Savills in support of the Application.

3.40 The rural landscape, is primarily defined by agricultural uses, with a significant quantum of built development at Arborfield Green, approximately 1.6km to the south and Shinfield, approximately 2.1km to the northwest altering the landscape character of the area. The potential built development as part of the Loddon Valley Garden Village allocation will also alter this character further. Southern parts of the Site, form a natural boundary and offer visual enclosure of the Site which will be preserved within the Proposed Development.

3.41 Although there are no national landscape designations on the Site, local policies (such as Policy NE6 – Valued Landscape of the emerging Local Plan Update) require careful integration of the development with the area's character and valued landscapes. Existing landscape features will be enhanced and incorporated into the masterplan's green network.

Landscape Strategy

3.42 The Landscape Strategy for the Proposed Development is shaped by a comprehensive assessment of the Site's character, history, and existing biodiversity. It seeks to preserve and enhance the natural qualities of the wider area. The Illustrative Masterplan and Landscape and Land Use Parameter Plan demonstrate how the development incorporates a generous setting of open spaces.

3.43 The landscape strategy is rooted in on-Site biodiversity assessments, ensuring all enhancements are informed by the ecological context. Together, these measures aim to deliver a resilient, ecologically rich environment, supporting wildlife, providing recreational opportunities, and reinforcing the area's unique character within the Proposed Development. The strategy is centred on creating a well-connected, high-quality environment. The inherent design of the scheme includes: multi-functional green spaces; tree management; hedgerow management; new planting; public realm; biodiversity enhancement; and, SuDS features.

Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG)

3.44 The Proposed Development requires the provision of Suitable Alternative Green Space in order to help protect and reduce recreational demands on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA).

3.45 The SANG needs to provide opportunities for informal recreation and in particular for dog walking with provision of a path network offering a variety of routes, parking facilities and access to spaces where dogs can be safely allowed off lead.

3.46 Further details of the proposed SANG are provided with the Design and Access Statement (DAS) submitted as part of the suite of planning application documents.

Energy and Sustainability

3.47 Sustainability, placemaking, and inclusive development form the foundation of resilient, thriving communities. To embed these principles throughout the project, a comprehensive sustainability framework has been established for the Proposed Development, ensuring a considered, responsible, and future-focused approach to planning and delivery. This framework guides every stage of the design and development process, from initial concept through to construction and occupation.

3.48 Underpinned by measurable and ambitious sustainability targets, it ensures each phase not only meets but exceeds the standards required to generate meaningful, long-term benefits for the local community.

Energy

3.49 The preliminary energy strategy for the Proposed Development is designed to support the ambition of delivering a net zero carbon community. This strategy follows the energy hierarchy – prioritising demand reduction, energy efficiency, and renewable energy generation – and sets out a clear pathway to minimise operational energy use across the Site.

3.50 A "fabric first" approach will underpin the design, focusing on optimising the thermal performance and airtightness of buildings to reduce the need for heating, cooling, and ventilation. The development aims to achieve a Site-wide average space heating demand of approximately 15-20 kWh/m²/year for both residential and non-residential buildings.

3.51 Once energy demand is reduced, efficient systems will be deployed, including all-electric heating solutions such as air-source or ground-source heat pumps, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR), and low-energy LED lighting with smart controls. Building Management Systems (BMS) and smart meters will be incorporated where appropriate to monitor and optimise energy performance.

3.52 To further reduce reliance on the grid, on-Site renewable energy technologies will be integrated, including photovoltaic (PV) panels and battery energy storage systems. These will help manage peak loads and store excess energy for use during periods of low generation.

Whole Life Carbon

3.53 The Proposed Development adopts a holistic approach to carbon reduction by addressing both operational and embodied carbon emissions through a Whole Life Carbon approach. This ensures that carbon impacts are considered from material extraction through to construction, operation, maintenance, and eventual deconstruction or reuse.

3.54 The development will also be fossil fuel-free, with an all-electric energy strategy supported by heat pumps and solar power, with an estimated Site-wide carbon emission savings potential of up to 95%, compared to a 2024 baseline. With renewables sized to match operational demand, in line with WBC's Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19), the development is expected to achieve carbon neutral status - complementing the whole life carbon strategy by eliminating emissions from on-Site combustion and reducing reliance on carbon-intensive infrastructure.

Utilities

3.55 A Utility Statement has been produced by BTS property consultancy.

3.56 The Site contains an overhead powerline, electricity pylon and gas Main. This includes high voltage overhead power. 132kV cables interects the Site running north to south on the western edge.

3.57 A medium pressure main is located in Mole Road on the southern boundary of the Site, turns north west and crosses the Site. An exclusion zone of at least 6m is required to any development from these mains and this has been factored into the parameters of the proposed development.

3.58 Thames Water's records show a foul sewer under Church Lane which does not extend along the boundary of the Site. BTS have assumed that this foul sewer will not require diversion to accommodate the Site access works.

3.59 Openreach infrastructure is located along the western boundary of the Site. There are underground BT Openreach cables within Church Lane and Mole Road. Gigaclear infrastructure is located within Church Lane and Mole Road.

3.60 The BT Openreach and Gigaclear cables within Mole Road will be affected by the proposed highways works and can be diverted to accommodate the necessary S278 works.

3.61 The load demands for the Proposed Development have been assessed and all necessary enquiries have been made with statutory undertakers and utility service providers.

Lighting

3.62 The Proposed Development is located in the countryside. The aim of a lighting strategy is to ensure a safe level of illumination is provided to all areas of the Proposed Development.

3.63 Due to the scale and nature of the Newlands Farm proposals, it is unlikely that significant effects will arise. The detailed design of lighting solutions will be taken into account at Reserved Matters stage.

Construction and Implementation

3.64 The approximate duration of the construction phase is outlined below:

- Construction to commence in 2027/28
- First occupation in 2028/29
- Construction to complete in 2033/34

3.65 Details of measures to protect the environment during the construction of the Proposed Development will be formalised and secured in a CEMP. Measures will address hours of working, noise, vibration, dust, light spill, wheel washing and control of runoff. It is anticipated that the submission and implementation of the CEMP will be a condition of the planning permission and that it will be regularly monitored.

3.66 Once finalised and approved by the Local Planning Authority, the CEMP would be held on-Site. All Site personnel would be made aware of its existence and undertake to adhere to the guidance.

4 Approach to Assessment

4.1 In order for the significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development to be identified and assessed, it is necessary to clearly identify all the components of the Proposed Development.

4.2 As the planning application is being made mostly in Outline but with access applied for in full, the EIA assesses the construction and operation effects of the Proposed Development through outline parameters (a set of parameter plans, which allow some flexibility for development within defined limits).

4.3 The outline parameters identify the maximum extent of development in order to assess the worst case development scenario. This allows inherent flexibility for future applications within these parameters. This is the ‘Rochdale Envelope’. The Parameter Plans set out the required information to allow the environmental effect of the Proposed Development to be assessed with sufficient certainty.

4.4 Where there is no topic specific guidance available, a generic framework of assessment criteria and terminology has been developed to enable the prediction of potential effects and their subsequent presentation. The development of this framework has drawn upon the experience of Savills and project team of undertaking EIA.

5 Project Team

5.1 The EIA project team is led by consultants Savills, with input from other specialists internal and external to the company. The project team comprises:

Title	Responsibility
EIA Management and Coordination	Savills
Air Quality	RPS Tetratech
Archaeology	RPS Tetratech
Built Heritage	RPS Tetratech
Climate Change & Greenhouse Gases	Savills
Ecology	EPR
Human Health	Marrons
Hydrology (including Flood Risk and Drainage)	ALP/RPS Tetratech
Landscape & Visual Impact	Savills
Noise and Vibration	RPS Tetratech
Socio-Economics	Marrons
Transport & Access	i-Transport
Summary	Savills

6 Findings of the EIA

Air Quality

6.1 The Air Quality Chapter sets out the assessment of effects in relation to air quality. The term air quality is a measure used to describe the level of pollutants present within the air.

6.2 A six-month monitoring scheme is currently being undertaken by RPS from 13/05/2025 to 24/11/2025 using diffusion tubes to measure NO2 concentrations at roadside and background locations across the Site and in the surrounding area. Data available from the monitoring scheme have been used to inform the baseline environment and verification of the dispersion model.

6.3 The background annual-mean NO_2 concentrations applied in this assessment have been derived from data available from the monitoring scheme. The background annual-mean PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations used in this assessment have been derived from Defra's national mapped modelled concentration estimates.

6.4 The main effect of any dust emissions during the construction phase, if not mitigated, could be annoyance due to soiling of surfaces, particularly windows, cars and laundry and the effects on human health from suspended particulate matter. However, it is normally possible, by implementation of proper control, to ensure that dust deposition does not give rise to significant adverse effects, although short-term events may occur (for example, due to technical failure or exceptional weather conditions).

6.5 A construction dust assessment for the Proposed Development was undertaken in accordance with national guidance and site-specific mitigation measures recommended. With the implementation of these measures, residual effects are considered to be not significant.

6.6 Emissions of NO_2, PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ generated by traffic associated with the Proposed Development, during construction and once operational, could have detrimental effects on surrounding sensitive receptors. The impacts of these pollutants, as a result of the Proposed Development in 2032 (peak construction year) and 2040 (year of full occupation), have been predicted (using a validated and locally adjusted dispersion modelling study) at surrounding sensitive existing and proposed human receptors and the residual effects are considered not significant.

6.7 Cumulative effects with surrounding developments, including other development parcels associated with the Loddon Valley Garden Village scheme, have also been taken into consideration. Overall, it is concluded that there will be no significant residual cumulative effects during the construction or operational phase of the Proposed Development on surrounding human receptors, alongside other projects.

Archaeology

6.8 The Archaeology assessment has been prepared by RPS Tetratech in line with relevant legislation, national and local planning policy and guidance produced by Historic England (HE), The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Practices (ISEP).

6.9 The assessment is informed by a baseline including data from Historic England's National Heritage List, the Berkshire Historic Environment Record, historic mapping, LiDAR data, satellite imagery, site visits and geophysical survey. It assesses the potential effects of the proposed development on eight archaeological receptors that had been previously identified by the baseline investigation.

6.10 Potential construction phase effects on archaeological receptors have been identified as soil-stripping and terracing; the cutting of new roads, foundations and services; changes to surface-water or groundwater flows; general hard and soft landscaping of the site; and indirect, non-physical impacts that change the way a receptor is experienced (i.e., setting impacts).

6.11 The archaeological receptors relate to the site of a Roman hoard, Roman pottery, Prehistoric flints, former ridge and furrow cultivation and uncharacterised anomalies from geophysical survey. All are located in parts of the Site that will be subject to below-ground impacts. However, it is anticipated that the loss of these receptors through development will be mitigated through a programme of further archaeological evaluation, excavation recording, assessment and publication. All archaeological investigation and recording will be undertaken in accordance with a scope that will be agreed with the Local Planning Authority's Archaeological Advisor.

6.12 It is concluded that none of the effects on archaeological features would be considered significant in terms of EIA Regulations.

Buit Heritage

6.13 The Built Heritage assessment has been prepared by Richard Smalley of RPS Tetratech and is informed by a baseline Built Heritage Statement including data from Historic England's National Heritage List, the Berkshire Historic Environment Record, historic mapping and site visits. It assesses the potential effects of the proposed development on five Listed Buildings, a Registered Park and Garden and two other buildings of historic interest.

6.14 Potential effects caused by the Proposed Development relate to how the receptors are experienced (i.e., their setting).

6.15 A negligible level of harm has been identified on St Bartholomew's Church, The Glen, Carters Hill, Old Rectory, Bearwood Park, Reading Room, Monk's Cottage. A minor level of impact has been identified for Mole Bridge Farmhouse.

6.16 It is concluded that none of the effects on built heritage receptors would be considered significant in terms of EIA Regulations.

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases

6.17 The Proposed Development has been assessed in terms of its potential contribution to climate change through greenhouse gas emissions, as well as its resilience to future climate conditions. The evaluation considers both the construction and operational phases, and includes a review of cumulative impacts alongside other developments in the area.

6.18 Currently, the Site comprises farmland and a small number of buildings, generating an estimated 25-60 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO_2e) per year. During construction, the development is expected to generate approximately 34,400 tCO_2e in embodied carbon emissions, which equates to around 2% of Wokingham's recommended carbon budget for 2027-2042. While this represents a measurable contribution, it is considered to have a minor adverse effect, provided that mitigation measures detailed within the Climate Change Statement are implemented. These measures include the use of low-carbon and locally sourced materials, the application of whole life carbon assessments to guide design and procurement, and the adoption of sustainable construction practices. The assessment also identifies climate risks to the construction workforce, particularly from heat stress during summer months, which are considered moderate and significant but can be reduced to low through health and safety protocols embedded in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

6.19 Once operational, the development will produce emissions from energy use in the proposed dwellings and transport. Without mitigation, these emissions would have a moderate adverse effect and be considered significant. However, the development incorporates a comprehensive mitigation strategy that includes a fabric-first approach to dwelling design, all-electric heating systems using air source heat pumps, and integration of photovoltaic panels sized to match operational demand. The potential use of a community energy network or SmartGrid alongside battery energy storage systems is also being explored to optimise energy use and reduce reliance on the national grid. Infrastructure to support low-carbon transport, such as electric vehicle charging points, and cycle parking, is included, alongside a Travel Plan to encourage walking, cycling, and public transport use.

6.20 Operational energy emissions for the fully completed development are estimated at 201 tCO_2e per year using current emission factors, or 21 tCO_2e per year using projected future factors for 2042. With the proposed mitigation measures, the proposed buildings within the development are expected to achieve operational carbon neutrality.

6.21 The development has also been designed to be resilient to future climate risks. These include overheating of buildings, increased flood risk, storm damage, and soil shrinkage leading to subsidence. Overheating is addressed through a combination of passive design measures, such as orientation, shading, and natural ventilation, and active systems like mechanical ventilation with heat recovery. Flood risk is managed through a comprehensive drainage strategy that includes Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), attenuation basins, and a sequential approach to masterplanning that concentrates development in areas of lower flood risk. Water efficiency is targeted at 105 litres per person per day, with the potential to reach 85 litres through rainwater harvesting and efficient fittings. Landscape and ecological resilience is supported through drought-tolerant planting and biodiversity enhancements to achieve at least a net gain of 10%.

6.22 The proposals align with national and local planning policy, including the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), Building Regulations Part L and Part G, the Future Homes Standard (2025), and Wokingham Borough Council's Development Plan and emerging Local Plan. The scheme exceeds current and emerging policy requirements for energy, carbon, water, and climate resilience.

6.23 In conclusion, the Proposed Development demonstrates a comprehensive and proactive response to climate change. Through integrated mitigation and adaptation strategies, it is expected to minimise greenhouse gas emissions, achieve operational carbon neutrality, and enhance resilience to future climate conditions. The development supports WBC's climate goals and contributes meaningfully to the UK's broader net zero ambitions.

Ecology

6.24 The EIA assessed the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the environment in respect of Ecology, in line with the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (CIEEM, 2018).

6.25 Ecological surveys have been undertaken across the Site since 2022 to establish the current baseline and identify important ecological features. These findings of these surveys identified the following important ecological features on-Site: deciduous woodland, veteran trees, hedgerows, bats. Furthermore, three statutory designated sites and twelve non-statutory designated sites are considered to fall within the zone of influence of the Proposed Development due to their location and/or likely sensitivity to a particular impact pathway. These sites are therefore also considered as important ecological features during the impact assessment.

6.26 Likely significant effects arising during the construction phase include disturbance, degradation and damage to habitats and species, direct harm to species, loss/fragmentation of habitats, dust generation and contamination of soil/waterbodies.

6.27 Mitigation measures to address significant negative effects during the construction phase include the implementation of the CEMP and suitable buffer zones. Where relevant, suitable licences, including European Protected Species Mitigation Licences, will be obtained and appropriate working method statements will be implemented to protect species against direct harm and prevent damage to sensitive flora.

6.28 Following the implementation of mitigation and compensation, no residual impacts are predicted.

6.29 Likely significant effects during the operational phase include an increase in recreational pressure, urban edge effects, disturbance, predation, increased risk of mortality and the implementation of habitat management plans.

6.30 Mitigation measures to address significant negative effects include the implementation of lighting strategies, as well as implementation of habitat creation and management plans.

6.31 Provision of greenspaces onsite and contribution to the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace strategy of the wider Loddon Valley Garden Village development will provide recreational opportunities for new and existing residents, mitigating the impact of recreational pressure both on and off-site.

6.32 With mitigation, it is concluded that no residual negative effects remain for the identified important ecological features.

6.33 Following the implementation of habitat creation and management plans, significant positive effects are anticipated for veteran trees, hedgerows and bats.

6.34 No negative cumulative effects are anticipated with respect to ecology for either the construction or operational phases of the Proposed Development. Positive impacts outlined above are expected to act cumulatively with the wider committed development.

Human Health

6.35 In 2021, the population of Wokingham Borough was 177,499, having grown by 15% since 2011 well above the national average of 6.6%.

6.36 The area is among the least deprived in England, with local wards falling within the 8th to 10th deciles of the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

6.37 Life expectancy is high: 82.2 years for males and 85.6 years for females in Wokingham, compared to 79.5 and 83.2 nationally.

6.38 Emergency hospital admissions for major conditions such as coronary heart disease, stroke, and COPD are significantly lower than the national average.

6.39 The unemployment rate is low at 3.0%, compared to 3.9% nationally.

6.40 There is currently one GP surgery within 2km of the site, with a patient-to-GP ratio of 1:1,861 slightly above the national benchmark of 1:1,800, indicating a modest shortfall in capacity.

6.41 The Effects on these human health receptors are defined as either:

- Beneficial – An advantageous effect on the impact area;
- Negligible – An imperceptible effect on the impact area; and
- Adverse – Detrimental effect on the impact area.

6.42 The significance of an effect is described as either Substantial, Major, Moderate, Minor, or, Neutral. Only effects that are moderate or greater are determined to be significant in EIA terms

6.43 After taking into account the impacts of the identified cumulative developments the residual impacts of the Proposed Development are as follows:

Construction Phase

6.44 Air quality and noise impacts from construction are expected to be temporary and well-managed through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). These are assessed as negligible and not significant.

6.45 Construction traffic may cause short-term disruption, but mitigation through a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) will minimise impacts. Effects on health are considered negligible and not significant.

6.46 The development is expected to generate 106 net additional construction jobs, with 43 jobs benefiting the local workforce. This is considered a minor beneficial effect on health due to improved employment and income.

6.47 The development will deliver up to 430 new homes, contributing to Wokingham's housing need. This is expected to have a minor beneficial effect on health by improving access to suitable housing and reducing overcrowding.

6.48 The scheme includes a comprehensive network of walking and cycling routes, new bus stops, electric vehicle charging, and a car club. These features support active lifestyles and reduce reliance on private cars.

6.49 Air quality and noise levels during operation are predicted to remain within acceptable limits, with no significant health impacts.

6.50 The development will increase demand for primary healthcare services, but this will be addressed through financial contributions to local provision. The effect is considered neutral.

6.51 The Site will include over 10 hectares of green infrastructure, including: parks and public gardens, natural/semi-natural green space, amenity greenspace, play space and allotments.

6.52 These spaces will support mental and physical wellbeing by providing opportunities for exercise, relaxation, and social interaction.

6.53 When considered alongside other planned developments in the area, including the wider Loddon Valley Garden Village, the combined effects on health are expected to remain not significant.

6.54 The wider development will include new health facilities, schools, and community spaces, which will support the creation of a healthy, inclusive, and resilient community.

6.55 The cumulative provision of housing across the area is expected to have a moderate beneficial effect on health by improving housing access and affordability.

6.56 The impact of human health is expected to be low, and the development's contributions to infrastructure will help manage any additional pressures.

6.57 Overall, the Proposed Development is not expected to result in any significant adverse effects on human health. With appropriate design, mitigation, and financial contributions to local infrastructure, the development is likely to bring minor health benefits, particularly through:

- Improved access to housing;
- Enhanced opportunities for active travel;
- Increased green space and recreational areas;
- Short-term employment opportunities during construction; and
- The development supports the creation of a healthy, sustainable, and well-connected community, in line with local and national planning policy.

Hydrology (including Flood Risk & Drainage)

Flood Risk and Drainage

6.58 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and the Drainage Strategy have been produced in line with NPPF and local policy requirements.

6.59 Within the area of interest are a number of Ordinary Watercourses. To establish the flood risk, baseline data has been obtained from the Environment Agency (EA) and Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). Readily available data from other sources has also been reviewed alongside extensive site visits in line with the standard approach for a FRA. In addition, detailed flood modelling has been completed to produce both fluvial and direct rainfall models within the area of interest. The existing drainage regime has been established through site observations, review of site based ground investigations and analysis of readily available data.

6.60 The areas for development have been located in areas where flood risk is low from all sources. Whilst there are some elements of infrastructure that will necessarily cross flood risk areas, these have been kept to a minimum in the context of other constraints. In these areas flood mitigation measures will be delivered through the design strategy particularly for sizing of crossings etc and provision of floodplain compensation if necessary.

6.61 A key component of the development is the surface water and foul water drainage strategy. As areas are developed the necessary drainage infrastructure will be provided, For surface water runoff this will take the form of SuDS which intercept the runoff and rainfall and ultimately convey it to strategic attenuation basins which then discharge into the local watercourses at controlled rates, following the natural drainage regime. The discharge will be restricted to the existing greenfield runoff rates, ensuring that there is no impact on the flow regimes in the receiving systems and providing betterment over the long term, when climate change impacts will take effect.

6.62 Potential impacts on localised flood risk and on the local drainage regime during construction will be managed through the provision of a Flood Management Plan and Construction Environmental Management Plan (or similar).

6.63 The development strategy, through adopting a sequential approach, and with the provision of flood mitigation where needed, ensures that there will be no significant impact of the proposed development on the flood risk regimes within the site and surrounding area. Likewise, the drainage strategy, through managing surface water runoff in a manner to replicate the natural drainage regimes will cause no adverse impacts on site or in the surrounding area and may in fact provide a long term betterment.

Water Framework Directive

6.64 The risk of deterioration of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) status of waterbodies as a result of the proposed scheme have been assessed. The WFD is a legal framework for ensuring the protection of the water environment. Major water environment receptors such as reaches of rivers , marine areas and aquifers are designated as “waterbodies” under the WFD and classified in quality according to several classification “elements” such as biological quality, physical chemistry, hydro-morphology and concentration of hazardous chemicals. To comply with the WFD, developers must demonstrate that proposed developments will not cause a deterioration in status of any of the classification elements in waterbodies that could be affected by the scheme. Where an impact on any waterbody is anticipated, mitigation measures must be put in place to ensure there is no deterioration of WFD status within each of the classification elements.

6.65 A WFD assessment was undertaken for the Proposed Development according to guidance set out by the Environment Agency who are responsible for implementation of the WFD. A screening assessment identified three surface water bodies and one groundwater body that could be affected by the proposed scheme. There are no sensitive receptors on-site, so the impacts of the development assessed are primarily concerning downstream waterbodies, namely Barkham Brook and then the River Loddon, downstream.

6.66 Potential WFD impacts from the construction phase were identified and related to works within the channel such as the construction of drainage outfalls, bridges and culverts. It was anticipated that works in the channel could disrupt habitats and natural river processes within the channel and the floodplain. It was recommended that the construction phase impacts could be mitigated by reinstating any bed and bank habitat lost during construction and the inclusion of native substrates (sediment) and emergent plants. Where culverts are installed, it was recommended that the gradient of the channel is preserved wherever possible. No residual impacts to WFD status are anticipated after the implementation of these measures.

6.67 Potential WFD impacts from the operational phase of the scheme were identified and included increased shading of watercourses by structures such as bridges and culverts, loss of river habitat from works within the channel and changes to downstream hydro-morphology. It was recommended that these impacts could be reduced by setting bridge piers back where possible to reduce shading, installing fish and invertebrate refuge structures at outfalls and embedding culverts with a natural substrate (sediment) bed. A 20-meter buffer was also recommended between the bank top and the proposed active travel routes. No residual impacts to WFD status are anticipated after the implementation of these measures.

Water Resources

6.68 The baseline has been established through obtaining and reviewing the local asset plans and information on sewers within the site and wider area. Thames Water data has been assessed and is presented in the Drainage Strategy report and confirms that there is a limited network of sewers within the surrounding area. There are also two water connections within the site for agricultural uses.

6.69 As part of the development strategy there will be considerations to help realise opportunities for water efficiency across the site. The foul water drainage system will be developed to complement local topography such as to minimise pumping requirements.

6.70 Any impacts during the construction work on water resources will be very limited and are deemed to be overall negligible. Operational effects will primarily be related to the provision of new infrastructure to provide foul water drainage through provision of a pumped system and a new potable water supply. These will be provided and managed by Thames Water to address the capacity shortfall in the existing network off site.

Landscape and Visual Impact

6.71 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, assesses how the Proposed Development may affect the landscape and views in and around the site. It was prepared by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute and follows national guidance. The chapter assesses:

- Changes to the landscape character (how the area looks and feels)
- Effects on landscape features (like trees, hedgerows, and watercourses)
- Effects on visual amenity (how the development may be seen from public viewpoints)

6.72 The Site lies on a rural terrace close to the River Loddon and comprises four fields used for arable farming and pasture, with a small area of woodland, Dog Kennel Copse. It also includes a stretch of Mole Road adjacent to the southern side of the fields. The Site's fields are enclosed by hedgerows and include some hedgerow trees, especially oaks. There are no public footpaths within the Site however a public byway runs adjacent to its western boundary. Dog Kennel Copse is covered by a draft local landscape designation called the River Loddon Valued Landscape.

Key Landscape Effects

- All arable farmland will be lost to make way for housing, public open space and roads.
- The development will change the character of the site, with fields replaced by housing and open spaces as well as the widened road entrance off Mole Road. The changes to the road will result in the removal of three oak trees and much of the hedgerow adjacent to Mole Road
- Other trees and hedgerows within the site will be retained and supplemented with numerous new trees. A new hedgerow will also be planted adjacent to the widened Mole Road to compensate for the removed hedgerow.
- The development will incorporate significant areas of open space, especially around the edges of the site. This will enable new trees to be planted which will help soften or screen views of the housing as well as contribute to attractive spaces for recreation. These areas will also provide space for wildlife enhancements such as meadows and food growing such as orchards, as well as two equipped play areas.
- The development will also enhance accessibility through the landscape, allowing people to run, walk and cycle through an area that is currently private. In addition a route will be provided for horse riders. These routes will connect with the wider network of public rights of way, including the byways leading to Carter's Hill to the north and Ellis's Hill to the south-east.

Key Visual Effects

- The Site is well screened by woodland to the north and west and Ellis's Hill to the south-east, so views from the wider area are limited.
- The only significant visual changes will be experienced by people using the byway that runs to the west and north of the Site (leading to Carter's Hill) and Church Lane to the south. In addition, a few private properties will experience changes to their views.
- Road users on Mole Road will also see the new development, but these users are generally passing at speed and are not in the area for recreational or residential purposes.
- Mitigation planting within the open spaces around the edges of the site will help soften views of the new buildings over time.

Mitigation Measures

- Locating new housing in the centre of the site to enable generous areas of open space around all of the site's boundaries. These areas can provide space for planting numerous trees which will reduce the visibility of new buildings and enable them to blend with the surrounding countryside.

- Retaining and enhancing existing vegetation by locating new development away from existing hedgerows and woodland.
- Providing compensatory planting to replace the hedgerows and trees where these have to be removed to allow access from Mole Road.
- Creating new green spaces to benefit people and wildlife, including space for planting new trees, meadows, orchards and play.
- Connecting new cycle, footpath and equestrian access routes with existing public rights of way in the wider landscape.

Long-Term Benefits

- Improved access to nature and recreation
- Landscape enhancements, including new tree and meadow planting
- Creation of naturalistic new wetland or pond areas as part of the sustainable drainage system.

Residual Effects

- Some localised adverse impacts on landscape character and views will remain, especially relating to the change from agricultural land to housing and views from the public routes immediately to the south and west of the site.
- However, many areas will benefit from landscape improvements and increased public access.

Cumulative Effects

- When considered alongside other nearby developments, the overall impact is not expected to be significantly greater. If the University of Reading land to the north is developed, this would further reduce the visibility of the Proposed Development.

Noise and Vibration

6.73 Noise and vibration from the Proposed Development have been assessed to protect both current neighbours and future residents. The main sources of noise and vibration are expected to come from construction activities (short-term), the operation of new plant or machinery, and increases in road traffic (long-term).

6.74 A noise and vibration assessment has been undertaken by qualified experts to determine the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the noise and vibration climate in the area during both the construction and occupational phases. In addition, the Site includes proposed noise-sensitive residential development and an assessment of the suitability of the Site for this use has also been included.

6.75 The existing noise climate on the Site is dominated by road traffic from Mole Road to the south-east and the M4 to the north. There are no perceptible sources of vibration.

6.76 An acoustic model and studies of existing noise recorded in the vicinity of the site have been used to predict the likely noise impact on the development. The assessment compares the ‘with’ and ‘without development’ situations to determine the impact due to development related traffic noise.

6.77 It is possible that the noise effects of construction close to the receptors nearest the site boundary could result in a minor adverse effect at times. However, when the detailed design is prepared, mitigation would be specified as appropriate to enable the contractor to prepare detailed method statements. In line with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), construction works will be undertaken according to 'best practicable means' which ensure that methods employed on the site are "reasonably practicable having regard amongst other things to local conditions and circumstances, to the current state of knowledge and to the financial implications". Construction noise levels may also be managed through close liaison with the local community to determine, for example, whether respite periods from the works would be advantageous. This may, for example, include undertaking the works based on a '2 hours on and 2 hours off' approach for noisy works. However, this can elongate the construction period which may be against the wishes of local residents who would prefer a shorter period of higher noise levels. Hence, it is essential that the contractor(s) engage with the local community prior to construction.

6.78 Vibration levels generated during the construction phase may be perceptible during periods when plant is working close to a receptor. However, these periods are expected to be very short in duration and can generally be tolerated with prior warning and good communication between the contractor and the local community. During worst-case construction works a minor adverse effect has been predicted.

6.79 The acoustic model has been used to predict the likely noise environment in the new dwellings and their gardens, and at the existing properties nearest to the site, taking into account the change in road traffic.

6.80 Based on the assessment, conventional construction would be suitable for the guideline noise levels to be achieved across the majority of the residential development, which can be confirmed during detailed design in order to ascertain the exact acoustic specification requirements for the final layout of housing, window sizes and internal living areas. Outdoor noise levels would be suitable across the site other than at proposed dwellings closest to Mole Road where the main garden areas should be positioned to the rear (north-west) and where gaps between buildings should be minimised.

6.81 For the existing noise sensitive receptors, the change in noise levels on local roads has been assessed. The results of the assessment show that the increase in noise levels due to road traffic are likely to be negligible.

6.82 During the occupation phase, the vehicles associated with the Proposed Development will be using the surrounding roads which has the potential to change noise levels in these areas. An assessment has been undertaken using information from the project's transport consultants to determine the change in noise levels on these roads which has shown that there will be very small changes, both increases and decreases. The changes will be negligible to minor.

6.83 The cumulative noise and vibration effects of the Proposed Development and committed developments in the area is predicted to be negligible.

6.84 A noise and vibration assessment has been undertaken to determine the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the noise and vibration climate in the area during both the construction and occupational phases. In addition, the Site includes proposed noise-sensitive development (the school and residential areas) and an assessment of the suitability of the Site for these uses has also been included.

6.85 The existing noise climate on the Site is dominated by road traffic from the M4 to the north and Mole Road to the south-east. There are no perceptible sources of vibration.

6.86 An acoustic model and studies of existing noise recorded in the vicinity of the site have been used to predict the likely noise impact on the development. The assessment compares the 'with' and 'without development' situations to determine the impact due to development related traffic noise.

6.87 It is possible that the noise effects of construction close to the receptors nearest the site boundary could result in a minor adverse effect at times. However, when the detailed design is prepared, mitigation would be specified as appropriate to enable the contractor to prepare detailed method statements. In line with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), construction works will be undertaken according to 'best practicable means' which ensure that methods employed on the site are "reasonably practicable having regard amongst other things to local conditions and circumstances, to the current state of knowledge and to the financial implications". Construction noise levels may also be managed through close liaison with the local community to determine, for example, whether respite periods from the works would be advantageous. This may, for example, include undertaking the works based on a '2 hours on and 2 hours off' approach for noisy works. However, this can elongate the construction period which may be against the wishes of local residents who would prefer a shorter period of higher noise levels. Hence, it is essential that the contractor(s) engage with the local community prior to construction.

6.88 Vibration levels generated during the construction phase may be perceptible during periods when plant is working close to a receptor. However, these periods are expected to be very short in duration and can generally be tolerated with prior warning and good communication between the contractor and the local community. During worst-case construction works a minor adverse effect has been predicted.

6.89 The acoustic model has been used to predict the likely noise environment in the new dwellings and their gardens, at and around the proposed new schools, and at the existing properties nearest to the site, taking into account the change in road traffic.

6.90 Based on the assessment, conventional construction would be suitable for the guideline noise levels to be achieved across the majority of the residential development, which can be confirmed during detailed design in order to ascertain the exact acoustic specification requirements for the final layout of housing, window sizes and internal living areas. Similarly, orientation and façade specification for the proposed educational buildings can be resolved at this stage. Outdoor noise levels would be suitable across the site other than at proposed dwellings closest to the M4 and along Mole Road where the main garden areas should be positioned to the rear (south for M4 and north-west for Mole Road) and where gaps between buildings should be minimised.

6.91 For the existing noise sensitive receptors, the change in noise levels on local roads has been assessed. The results of the assessment show that the increase in noise levels due to road traffic are likely to be negligible.

6.92 During the occupation phase of the Proposed Development, it is expected that there will be external plant items associated with aspects of the non-residential uses of the Proposed Development. Noise emission limits have been provided for these plant items which would be translated to a planning condition. The noise emission limits reduce the likelihood of adverse noise impacts associated with external plant.

6.93 During the occupation phase, the vehicles associated with the Proposed Development will be using the surrounding roads which has the potential to change noise levels in these areas. An assessment has been undertaken using information from the project's transport consultants to

determine the change in noise levels on these roads which has shown that there will be very small changes, both increases and decreases. The changes will be negligible to minor.

6.94 The cumulative noise and vibration effects of the Proposed Development and committed developments in the area is predicted to be negligible.

Socio-economics

6.95 In 2021 (ONS 2021 Census) the total population of Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC) administrative area was estimated to be 177,499 people, or about 0.3% of England's population (56,489,800). WBC's population has increased by approximately 15% (47,800) between 2011 and 2021, which is about 8.5% higher than the national increase in population during the same period. The population of WBC was projected to increase from 172,104 in 2020, to 191,901 in 2043.

6.96 Affordability issues in Wokingham are acute, with the 2024 lower quartile affordability ratio being 12.17. This means an individual earning a lower quartile salary would need 12.17 times that salary to afford a lower quartile priced property. This exceeds the South East (9.38) and England (6.77) averages by a significant margin.

6.97 Within a two km catchment from the Proposed Development Site there is one nursery, and two primary schools providing nursery provision. There are also 10 primary schools within a 3.2km radius which were assessed to have some capacity. There are also eight secondary schools within the Secondary Impact Area (a 5.8km radius), with a spare capacity of 639 places.

6.98 Also within the 2km catchment there are two community centres. There are also a range of open, green and play spaces accessible to existing residents in the local area.

6.99 The Effects on these socio-economic receptors are defined as either:

- Beneficial – An advantageous effect on the impact area;
- Negligible – An imperceptible effect on the impact area; and
- Adverse – Detrimental effect on the impact area.

6.100 The significance of an effect is described as either Substantial, Major, Moderate, Minor, or, Neutral. Only effects that are moderate or greater are determined to be significant in EIA terms

6.101 After taking into account the impacts of the identified cumulative developments the residual impacts of the Proposed Development are as follows:

Construction Jobs

6.102 The construction of the Proposed Development is expected to generate up to 106 net additional, temporary full time equivalent (FTE) on and off-site construction jobs. The Proposed Development in combination with the identified cumulative development are anticipated to have a minor beneficial effect over the short term on construction employment.

Housing

6.103 The delivery of new dwellings provided by the Proposed Development and the cumulative development will be a beneficial addition to the housing pipeline in Wokingham and will create new opportunities for people looking for housing in the local area. This is predicted to generate a moderate beneficial (significant) effect over the long term.

Pre Schools

6.104 Within the 2lm catchment area there is reasonable provision of nursery facilities. In comparison to total provision the Proposed Development will generate a nominal level of additional demand for places.

6.105 Through proposing to provide a financial contribution to meet nursery provision at primary schools, contributing to the wider social infrastructure provision of Loddon Garden Village it is estimated that the Proposed Development will have a neutral effect over the long-term.

Primary Schools

6.106 Within the 3.2km catchment area there is good provision of primary school facilities, however, with some spare capacity, exceeding demand created by the Proposed Development.

6.107 Through proposing to provide financial contributions to meet the primary education needs arising from it, contributing to the wider social infrastructure provision of Loddon Garden Village the Proposed Development is estimated to have a Neutral effect over the long-term.

Secondary Schools

6.108 Within the Secondary Impact Area there is good provision of secondary school facilities, with a spare capacity of around 470 places. The identified cumulative development combined with the Proposed Development are estimated to have a neutral effect over the long-term. This is due financial contributions that are anticipated to be provided from all developments.

Community halls

6.109 There are two community halls located within a 2km radius. Based upon a neutral effect on this receptor over the long term.

Public Open Space

6.110 The baseline assessment found that existing residents in the 2km Catchment Area have access to a range of playing fields and PRoWs. The Proposed Development seeks to enhance open and natural spaces through the creation of a network of open spaces throughout the site which will provide existing and future residents with access to nature and space to move, play and relax.

6.111 In total, the Proposed Development comprises circa 10.3ha of green infrastructure, including 1.173ha of parks and public gardens; 7.29ha of natural/ semi natural green space; 1.136ha of amenity greenspace; 0.26ha of play space; and 0.556ha of allotments.

6.112 On the basis the Proposed Development is anticipated to have a minor beneficial effect over the long term.

Transport and Access

6.113 The potential effects of the proposed development at Newlands Farm (Loddon Valley Garden Village) have been assessed in terms of transport. A comprehensive Transport Assessment has been prepared and examines in detail the transport effects of the proposed development on the surrounding transport network and provides the basis for this transport assessment of the EIA.

6.114 An assessment of baseline transport conditions is undertaken in line with the assessments prepared for the Transport Assessment.

6.115 During the construction phase of the Proposed development, construction traffic is expected in the form of material and product deliveries by heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and each construction phase will require onsite operation of construction equipment and plant. The construction period is relatively short-term and only temporary in its effects. Mitigation measures to address the transport effects associated with the construction of the development will be coordinated and implemented by means of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), including a construction vehicle routing plan and specified timings for access to the construction site. The Construction Environmental Management Plan will be secured by a planning condition or S106 Agreement.

6.116 During its operational phase, the development will increase travel demand in the area overall compared to the existing baseline conditions and the future baseline conditions. The key areas where an impact is identified relates to conditions for vehicles on Reading Road to the south west of the site.

7.3.1 A number of mitigation measures are put forward as part of the proposals including:

- Site access to Mole Road via a ghost island priority junction
- Emergency vehicle, pedestrian and cycle access to Church Lane
- A signal controlled crossing of Mole Road in the vicinity of Ellis' Hill
- Provision of WBC's proposed Greenway links on Mole Road and Church Lane
- Vehicular, pedestrian and cycle connections to the wider LVGV, tying into the proposed road network and Active Travel Strategies for the LVGV
- A scheme of replacement traffic calming on Sindlesham Road
- On-site mitigation to include EV charging, cycle parking and a car club
- Emerging public transport strategy for the wider LVGV
- A Framework Travel Plan to promote and encourage the use of non-car modes.

6.117 These mitigation measures seek to offset the impacts of the development where these have been identified.

6.118 Cumulative assessment of the operational phase of the Proposed Development and the LGV Project shows that during its operational phase, the cumulative development will increase travel demand in the area overall compared to the existing baseline conditions and the future baseline conditions. Impacts on various links within the surrounding road network are identified. The LGV Project provides further mitigation seeking to further offset the impacts of the development where these have been identified.

7 Conclusion

7.1 The ES has considered how the environment and the local community would be affected by the Proposed Development.

7.2 A range of likely effects have been predicted to occur as a result of the Proposed Development, both beneficial and adverse, and mitigation measures have been identified either within the scheme design or additionally to minimise or offset identified adverse effects where possible.

Next Steps

7.3 The ES has been submitted alongside other documents in a planning application to the Council. Prior to making a decision, the Council will consult with relevant statutory and non-statutory bodies for advice on the proposals. Members of the general public are also welcome to make comments on the application during this time. The feedback from these consultations will be taken into account by the Council in reaching their decision.

7.4 The Environmental Statement and other planning application documents can be viewed on the Council's planning applications website:

https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/existing-planning-applications

7.5 A copy of the Environmental Statement on USB flash drive is available at a charge of £25.00. Enquiries in respect of these or printed copies of the ES and Appendices should be made to Savills: *UK_SouthamptonPlanning@savills.com*, or alternatively, telephone 01202 856 800.

7.6 Should interested parties wish to make representations on the content of this ES, they should be made in writing by post or by email at:

planning.enquiries@wokingham.gov.uk

Wokingham Borough Council

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7.7 Alternatively, representations can be made online by following instructions at:

https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/existing-planning-applications/comment-planning-application

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