

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared by the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) project team (see Section 1.5) on behalf of Gleeson Land (the Applicant) to support the planning application for the development of land at Newlands Farm that falls within the proposed Loddon Valley Garden Village, Wokingham (LVGV, the 'Site').

1.1.2 The Applicant has submitted an Outline planning application to Wokingham Borough Council (the Council), which is the local planning authority (LPA) for the location, seeking planning consent for up to 430 new homes. The description of development for the planning application is as follows:

"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."

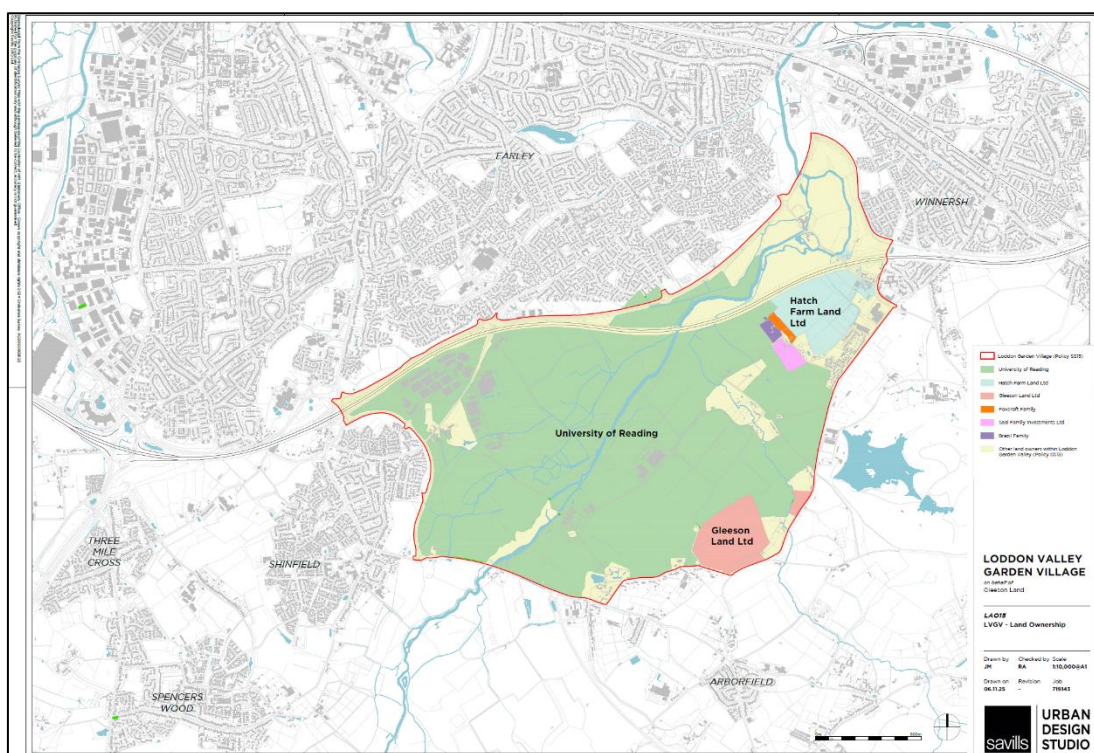
1.2 Background and Planning Context

- 1.2.1 The Site is a large area of land to the west of Wokingham, to the north of the village of Arborfield, southeast of the village of Shinfield and southwest of the village of Shinfield. It is located outside of the Green Belt.

The Wider Strategic Development Location – Loddon Valley Garden Village (LVGV)

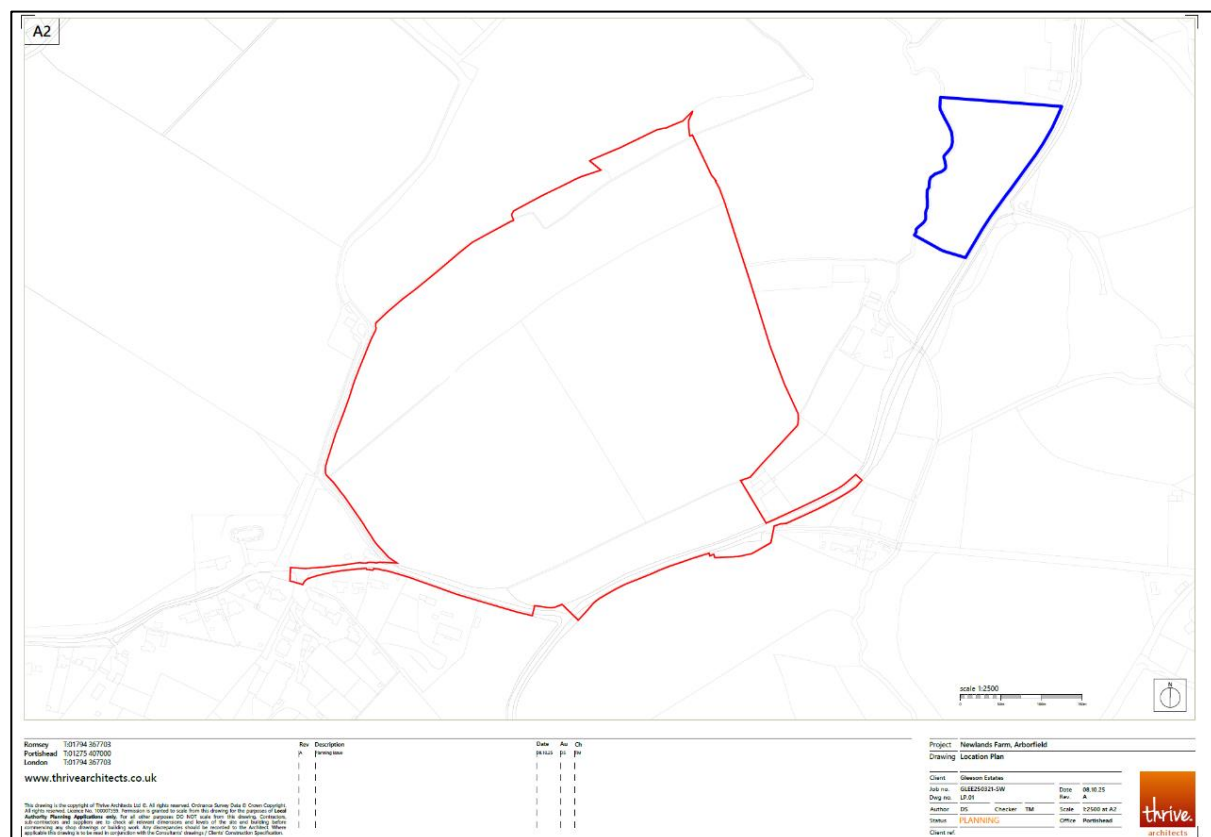
- 1.2.2 The Site is located on land proposed to be allocated as a Strategic Development Location (SDL) in the emerging Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU). The SDL is referred to in the LPU as the Loddon Valley Garden Village (LVGV) and this application is referred to as Newlands Farm. The development principles for the LVGV are set out in LPU Policy SS13 (Hall Farm / Garden 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.
- 1.2.3 The LPU was submitted for Examination on the 28th February 2025. The Examination is expected to continue throughout 2025 before the LPU is adopted in 2026.
- 1.2.4 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 1.1 alongside the associated land ownerships (see separate 'Figure 1.1 Red line boundary for the LVGV SDL (RL01 LVGV - Land Ownership)' to view full size drawing).
- 1.2.5 The location and extent of the planning application Site (to which this ES relates) is identified by the red line shown in the Figure below (see separate 'Figure 1.2 Site Location Plan LP.01 Rev. A'). In total, the Site covers an area of approximately 23.35 hectares (ha).

Figure 1.1 Red line boundary for the LVGV SDL (RL01 LVGV - Land Ownership)



- 1.2.6 Prior to the preparation of this Environmental Statement, all the Landowners forwent the submission of a request for a Screening Opinion, on the basis that and undertook a joint EIA scoping exercise. The Landowners are progressing separate planning applications covering their parcels of development which will be subject to their own separate Environmental Impact Assessments.
- 1.2.7 The LVGV Project (including The University of Reading and Hatch Farm Land Limited (HFLL) developments) have been assessed as part of the Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA) under the following assessment scenarios:
- Baseline/Future Baseline
 - Baseline/Future Baseline + The Proposed Development (Gleeson Application Proposals)
 - The Proposed Development + wider development within the LVGV (Policy SS13) allocation (based upon available information) (The LVGV Project)
 - The Proposed Development + The LVGV Project + wider Cumulative Development
- 1.2.8 Further details on the approach to the assessment are set out within Chapter 5.

Figure 1.2 Site Location Plan (LP.01 Rev. A)



1.3 Environmental Impact Assessment

- 1.3.1 EIA is a process that formally considers the construction and operational aspects of a proposal that may have significant effects on the environment. The findings of an EIA are described in a written report known as an Environmental Statement. 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.
- 1.3.2 This document is the ES submitted with the planning application for the Proposed Development and sets out the results of the EIA undertaken. This ES is prepared in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the 'EIA Regulations'). A separate Non-Technical Summary (NTS) provides a summary of the main findings of the ES.
- 1.3.3 A request was made to the Council for its EIA scoping opinion in December 2024 (Appendix 5.1). The purpose of this was to identify what the Council considers to be the main environmental issues associated with the Proposed Development. The Council consulted with statutory consultees and issued a formal EIA scoping opinion on 28th February 2025 (see Appendix 5.2). The EIA has been undertaken in accordance with the Scoping Opinion insofar as it relates to the Gleeson application site (the Site).
- 1.3.4 An EIA has been undertaken for the Proposed Development described in Chapter 3. A list of tables, figures and appendices is listed above in the contents page. 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.

1.4 Environmental Statement Structure

1.4.1 This ES comprises the Main Report, Figures, supporting Appendices and a separate NTS. Following this introduction and description of the Site, the ES Main Report is organised as follows:

2. Site and Local Context
3. Proposed Development
4. Consultation, alternatives and design evolution
5. Approach to Assessment
6. Planning Policy Context
7. Air Quality
8. Archaeology
9. Built Heritage
10. Climate change & Greenhouse Gases
11. Ecology
12. Human Health
13. Hydrology (Flood Risk & Drainage)
14. Landscape & Visual Impact
15. Noise and vibration
16. Socio-economics
17. Transport and Access
18. Summary of mitigation, residual effects and interaction effects

1.4.2 Chapter 2 provides a description of the Site and its surroundings, including the Wider SDL, and Chapter 3 explains each element of the Proposed Development and defines the physical and operational aspects assessed by the EIA. The alternative options considered during the site selection and environmental influences on the design process are explained in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 sets out the approach taken to the assessment. Chapter 6 outlines the relevant planning policy context in relation to the Proposed Development and the assessments undertaken within the EIA.

1.4.3 Environmental issues assessed in the EIA process are then reported in Chapters 7 to 17, with the majority of associated figures provided as separate files (PDF), although some are set within the text of the Chapters. Chapter 18 provides a summary of the proposed mitigation, residual and interaction effects.

1.5 The Project Team

1.5.1 Those working on the EIA of the Proposed Development are as follows:

Table 1.1 Project Team

Chapter	Title	Responsibility
1	Introduction	Savills
2	Site Description	
3	Proposed Development	
4	Consultation, Alternative and design evolution	
5	Approach to Assessment	
6	Planning Policy Context	
7	Air Quality	RPS
8	Archaeology	RPS
9	Built Heritage	RPS
10	Climate Change & Greenhouse Gases	Savills
11	Ecology	EPR Ltd.
12	Human Health	Marrons
13	Hydrology (including Flood Risk and Drainage)	ALP/RPS
14	Landscape & Visual Impact	Savills
15	Noise and Vibration	RPS
16	Socio-Economics	Marrons
17	Transport & Access	i-Transport
18	Summary	Savills

1.5.2 The EIA has been coordinated by Savills with the technical assessments and input undertaken by the project team. An outline of the qualifications/experience of the assessors to demonstrate competency in accordance with the EIA Regulations is provided in Appendix 1.1. Furthermore, a glossary of terms is provided in Appendix 1.2.

1.6 Availability of environmental information

- 1.6.1 The Environmental Statement (including its figures and technical appendices) and other planning application documents can be viewed on the Council's planning applications website:

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

- 1.6.2 A copy of the ES on USB Flash Drive can be obtained for a charge of £25 from: *UK_SouthamptonPlanning@savills.com*, Telephone 02380 713 900. A printed copy of the NTS can also be obtained free of charge from Savills.

1.7 Consultation

- 1.7.1 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

Shute End

Wokingham, Berkshire

RG40 1BN

0118 974 6000

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

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